

Economy in deep recession, CBI reports

Pressure grows for early cut in interest rates

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND COLIN NARBROUGH

THE economy is plunging into a deep recession, according to a report published today by the Confederation of British Industry.

It shows that firms are gloomier about production over the next four months than at any time since the economic downturn of the early 1980s, with three companies expecting output to fall for every one expecting a rise.

The CBI report immediately led to growing pressure on the government from the Labour party, industry, and even some of its own backbenchers, to sanction an early cut in interest rates.

It comes after a week of economic statistics which suggest that deep recession is at hand. Government figures last Friday showed the fall in manufacturing output gathering pace, falling by 3 per cent in the year to October. The report also follows the 58,000 rise in the number of jobless in November, the biggest jump in nine years. Friday's sharp fall in inflation also suggests that recession is biting.

David Wigglesworth, chairman of the CBI economic situation committee, said

businesses are facing a "tough new year". He said: "We are looking to the chancellor for cuts in interest rates as soon as possible to encourage manufacturing investment."

Figures for manufacturing investment to be published this week are expected to show a sharp fall, as firms cut back to conserve their resources.

Mr Wigglesworth's views were echoed by Paul Tosh, managing director of Vauxhall, as car industry bosses contemplated unpublished figures for December from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders showing sales slumping 20 per cent in the early part of the month with the prospect of worse to come. Mr Tosh said: "We believe the first half of next year is going to be depressed and it is only after a change in interest rates that will see some recovery."

Industry's demands for an easing of the credit squeeze were publicly backed by Labour. More worrying for the government, some Tory MPs are becoming increasingly alarmed about the electoral effects of a prolonged and painful recession in the run-up to the next election.

John Smith, the shadow chancellor, said that the government had put themselves in an unenviable dilemma because market confidence in the economy and ministers' handling of it was so low.

"The fear pressure on the pound if they cut interest rates, but I believe the market has already discounted a prospective cut in interest rates, and they should therefore now cut interest rates."

"I think we are hitting a very serious recession. Unemployment will continue to rise, training will continue to be cut back, and investment will be cut back."

Anthony Beaumont-Dart, Tory MP for Birmingham Selly Oak and a member of the cross-party Treasury select committee, said he was in no doubt that businessmen were gloomier than at any time since 1980-1.

"If interest rates go on as they are now, there will be quite a few more hundred thousand people unemployed and quite a few thousand companies will bite the dust."

The CBI monthly survey is

the sixth in a row to indicate deteriorating expectations about the volume of output. While 44 per cent of the respondents anticipate falling production, only 14 per cent expect a rise. The negative balance of 30 per cent is the worst since December 1980. In November, the negative balance was 23 per cent after 17 per cent in October.

Giles Radice, Labour MP for Durham North and a fellow member of the Treasury committee, called for a "negotiated devaluation" within the ERM to give a rate for sterling that could be defended "without crippling the whole economy".

The select committee is due to meet today to agree a final draft of its report on the chancellor's autumn statement. The report, to be published on Thursday, is bound to be critical of government handling of the economy and could intensify the pressure on Norman Lamont, the chancellor, by making recommendations along the lines suggested by the two MPs.

Another senior Tory backbencher with close links with the Treasury said it had been crazy to join the ERM at the central rate of DM2.95 and the government would have to pull out or devalue. "It's one thing to shut inefficient industries, to cut out the fat as we did in 1981; it's quite another thing to shut efficient industries. That's what we are in danger of doing now."

But Sir William Clark, chairman of the backbench Tory finance committee, said that the government should not be panicked into an interest-rate cut now.

He predicted that interest rates would fall early in the new year once there was further confirmation of last week's figures showing that inflation had peaked.

Last week, Mr Lamont appeared to rule out an early cut in interest rates, when he made clear that maintaining sterling's value within the ERM, where it is near the bottom of its band, was his main priority. Many MPs saw his remarks as an attempt to talk the pound up and to give himself scope for an interest rate reduction before long.

Mortgage shock, page 21

Envoys leave flag flying in Kuwait

By OUR DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Weston, the British ambassador in Kuwait, and Larry Banks, the consul, flew out of the occupied city yesterday, leaving the British flag flying over the embassy compound where they had been besieged for 111 days.

The British diplomats, the last Western officials to resist Iraqi pressure for the withdrawal of diplomatic immunity, flew to Baghdad on an Iraqi Airways shuttle. They are expected to fly on to London within a few days.

Foreign Office officials said the embassy was remaining open in a formal sense as the diplomats were being withdrawn temporarily. They emphasised that the term "closed" was not being used and that was why the flag was left flying. The embassy was "formally open with the

British government continuing to recognise the legitimate government of Kuwait and rejecting Iraq's illegal occupation."

Mr Weston and Mr Banks had made the embassy compound secure before leaving and under the terms of the Vienna Convention it was regarded as inviolable.

The diplomats were accompanied to Baghdad by ten British citizens - six adults and four children.

Sources in Whitehall estimate that there are about 40 British nationals left in Kuwait, most of whom are either women married to Kuwaitis or men with Kuwaiti wives.

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Peace efforts, page 9

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Plea for peace: The new Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, Dr Cahal Daly, at his installation yesterday when he appealed to the IRA to call off its terror campaign. Primate's advice, page 2

Court asked for Sunday shop ban

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE shopworkers' union, Usdaw, will today apply to the High Court for injunctions to prevent shops opening illegally on Sundays as increasing numbers have been doing in the run-up to Christmas.

Yesterday, many leading High Street retailers, including the jewellers, Ratners and H Samuel, and the BHS group, opened for trade in defiance of the law.

Andrew Wise, who is sponsored by Usdaw, said yesterday: "I am delighted that this [union] decision has been taken. Inefficient traders are trying to steal a march by opening on Sundays in unfair competition with the law-abiding majority. It is particularly despicable that they are bringing pressure to bear on individual employees."

"They get people to come in on Sunday by suggesting that there are plenty of other people willing to do their jobs if they are not willing to oblige, or by offering extra payments when they should already be paying their staff better wages."

Mrs Wise said that the only effect of Sunday opening would be to move trade from one day to another, not to increase it, and also doubted that those opening on Sundays would reap large profits as a result.

"Many people are outraged that the law is being flouted," she said. "The traders incur a lot of overheads by opening on Sundays, and I do not know that they attract a lot of customers."

Mrs Wise said that she supported the application for injunctions against illegal opening. "Prevention is better than cure," she said. "I am on the side of shop workers and their families who have a right to their day off."

Repeated attempts to reform the shop-hours legislation have failed in the past, although it is widely acknowledged that it contains many anomalies.

Law flouted, page 3

ANC threatens to suspend key talks with Pretoria

From GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

THE African National Congress has threatened to withdraw from negotiations with Pretoria unless all political prisoners are released, exiles are repatriated, and the remaining apartheid legislation is repealed, by April 30.

At the conclusion of a national consultative conference yesterday, the ANC also gave a warning that it would consider resuming its "armed struggle" unless Pretoria halted political violence in black townships. It further resolved to declare 1991 a "year of mass action for the transfer of power to the people".

The militant mood was expressed in a declaration which accused the South African government of reneging on its commitments, and of attempting to perpetuate white domination in other forms. Significantly, the document was read to the 1,600 delegates not by Nelson Mandela, the ANC deputy president, but by Chris Hani, the chief of staff of the ANC armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

To sustained applause, he said: "While we remain committed to exploring every possibility for a peaceful transition to a democratic South Africa, the apartheid regime has in recent months demonstrated that it is not committed to this objective. The regime has its own agenda, that of retaining white domination in a new form."

Warning that ANC patience was running out, and calling for the prompt removal of

obstacles to constitutional negotiations, he said: "We say to the international community and the regime that should real progress in this regard not be evident, we shall not hesitate to direct the national executive committee (NEC) to suspend talks."

The demands were listed in a separate resolution as the release of political prisoners, the return of exiles, the repeal



Hani gave warning that patience is running out of repressive legislation, and an end to political trials. The resolution said: "The NEC serves notice on the regime that unless all the obstacles are removed on or before the 30th April 1991, the ANC shall consider the suspension of the whole negotiation process."

The resolution claimed that violence in the townships was a deliberate attempt by the government and its allies to destabilise the ANC and terrorise its supporters. Unless Pretoria halted the carnage, the ANC would find it difficult, if not impossible, to adhere to its commitment last

August to suspend its "armed struggle".

The conference also called for a mass action campaign next year to hasten the transfer of power. Demonstrations at the opening of parliament in Cape Town on February 1 will demand an interim government, a constituent assembly, and the abolition of the tricameral parliament from which blacks are excluded, and of the bantustan system.

Despite steps by the European Community to ease economic sanctions, the conference resolved that sanctions should be maintained.

On a more alarming note, it was confirmed that ANC guerrillas are present in the strife-torn townships, and that henceforth they will participate in the defence of their communities. A national defence committee is to be formed, which will organise local self-defence units.

The ANC claims that political rivalry with the Inkatha Freedom Party, led by Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi,

Continued on page 20, col 1

Britain is not for burning, Hurd says

By MICHAEL KNIFE
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN had no intention of being "burned at the stake" as a heretic because it did not agree with considerable portions of the Delors plan for European monetary integration, said Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary yesterday on his return from the European summit in Rome.

He was reacting to a warning by Jacques Delors, the president of the European Commission, at the end of the summit, that the rest of the community would be prepared to provoke a "second political crisis" over Britain's proposal for a hard ecu.

M Delors comments were an unexpected sign of irritation following the success of John Major in demonstrating a new style of presentation for Britain's policies towards Europe.

M Delors, who said he was distrustful of Britain's proposals, was believed to be concerned that other countries might swing behind the British proposal. But Mr Hurd, speaking on BBC Radio 4's *The World This Weekend*, said Britain had achieved "quite a useful outcome" at the summit.

"The skill with which the Prime Minister handled it was a main contribution to that," he said. "We showed we can have a continuous policy towards Europe which is constructive and can be argued through in a reasonable tone of voice."

Mr Hurd said that this created exactly the right atmosphere for the Chancellor, Norman Lamont, and himself to go into the inter-governmental conferences respectively on political union and economic and monetary union.

M Delors's plans for economic union could not be regarded as some kind of sacred writ, said Mr Hurd. "We do not feel it is heresy or a sin to suggest that too needs to be questioned and examined. We have no intention of being burned at the stake as heretics because we do not agree with considerable portions of the Delors plan as it stands."

"I do not believe that anything in the Community is inevitable. I do not think the Community is like a river just sweeping all its members inevitably down to a certain destination."

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Delors pique, page 10

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Car computer puts the brakes on drink drivers

By KEVIN EASON
MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

DRIVERS may one day have to pass a breath test to convince their cars that they are fit to drive before they can go anywhere.

Sir Ian Lloyd, the Conservative MP for Havant, Hampshire, wants to introduce to Britain a device not yet seen in Europe: the breathalyzer lock.

Drivers would have to blow into a small breathalyzer computer on the dashboard to convince it their breath levels were safe. If the level is too high, the computer cuts into the electronic ignition so the car will not start.

Some systems also require the driver to enter a code number on an electronic keyboard to prove their sobriety before the car will start. The devices are already used in the United

States, mainly in the cars of previously convicted drunk drivers.

In the absence of such safeguards in Britain, police have instituted the toughest crackdown yet on drink-driving over Christmas. The Metropolitan Police stopped 5,496 drivers last week. Of those, 423 were arrested for being over the limit or refusing to give a breath test.

That compares with 4,441 breath tests in the first week of last year's annual anti-drink drive campaign, leading to 255 arrests. No figures have yet been prepared for the rest of Britain.

Sir Ian is proposing amendments to the road traffic bill presently on its way through parliament, seeking to make breathalysers more widely available so that motorists can know what state they are in before they

drive. Sir Ian wants all licensed pubs, bars and restaurants to be obliged to have electronic breathalysers installed by law, allowing drivers to get a readout of their alcohol-breath level by putting 50p into a slot machine into which they blow.

The proposal has provoked criticism from police and motoring organizations. Andrew Howard, head of road safety at the Automobile Association, said: "The machines may not be accurate and will not be a defence in court. They merely encourage drivers to continue drinking up to the legal limit."

In Australia, the introduction of bar room breathalyser machines coincided with an 80 per cent reduction in drinking and driving offences. British police remain sceptical as evidence here continues to suggest

that only widespread enforcement will prevent drivers from drinking before taking to the road.

A recent survey by Gallup for General Accident, Britain's third largest motor insurance group, showed that four in ten company car drivers drink and drive. Gallup interviewed 478 company drivers and found that 41 per cent drove after drinking. The figure among 520 private motorists was 30 per cent.

If extrapolated to Britain's company car population, that would mean that about 1.2 million drivers regularly drink and drive. Though all those interviewed condemned driving while over the legal limit, Gallup concluded that it was "reasonable to assume that at least some of the drivers have drunk enough to impair their ability to drive safely."

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Tory activists bring Thatcher's foes to 'trial' this week

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Mates, the Conservative MP for Hampshire East who masterminded Michael Heseltine's campaign for the Tory leadership, will tonight try to beat off an attempt to unseat him by local party activists.

They are furious at the role he played in Margaret Thatcher's fall from power and determined to exact revenge.

Mr Mates's "trial" at a Hampshire school will be the first of a series of such ordeals for Tory MPs who spoke out against Mrs Thatcher during last month's leadership contest.

Tomorrow night, Peter Temple-Morris, MP for Leominster, will face a no-confidence motion for backing Mr Heseltine's challenge, which paved the way for John Major's election to the leadership of the Conservative party. Cyril Townsend, MP for

Berkeley, Sir Philip Goodhart, MP for Beckenham, and Julian Critchley, MP for Aldershot, will also be battling for their political lives later in the week.

Ivor Stanbrook, MP for Orpington, faces a deselection move. A meeting has been provisionally fixed for January 11 to discuss a petition signed by 74 local Tories.

Mr Stanbrook, who voted for Mr Heseltine in both ballots, said: "I have nothing but contempt for the motion and its signatories. They are a small bunch of discontents who are totally unrepresentative of the 27,000 constituents who vote for me at election time."

Mr Major and Chris Patten, the Tory chairman, have already come to the aid of the embattled MPs by urging the party faithful not to indulge in recriminations over the leadership contest.

Yesterday, senior sources at



Tory MPs under fire: Michael Mates, Peter Temple-Morris, Cyril Townsend and Ivor Stanbrook

Conservative Central Office predicted that none of the MPs would be deselected. They said that grassroots "Thatcher di-hawks" would be satisfied with rapping the MPs over the knuckles and making it clear that they disapproved of their conduct.

Mr Mates said yesterday: "I have had lots of messages of support and I hope they will be reflected in what happens tomorrow."

He will reply to critics at the end of what is expected to be a stormy meeting at which about 20 local Tories are expected to have a say. Mr Mates is known for his blunt speaking and is expected to give a robust response to a motion effectively deselection him.

Mr Temple-Morris's critics in Leominster are led by Peter Tebbitt, the 52-year-old brother of Norman Tebbitt, who played a

prominent part in Mrs Thatcher's campaign. The critics have forced a special constituency party general meeting in Leominster tomorrow night when all 2,400 local party members will be able to vote on a motion of no confidence in Mr Temple-Morris.

Mr Peter Tebbitt, of Colwall, near Malvern, claims that Mr Temple-Morris caused a deep rift in the constituency by backing Mr

Heseltine's leadership challenge without consulting his local party. Some Tory workers have already resigned, and Mr Tebbitt claims that up to 30 per cent may join them if the MP stays on.

"I feel he is not fit to continue as MP because of the way he treated constituency members with utter contempt for their views," Mr Tebbitt said. "When I heard this little man attempting to ditch Mrs Thatcher it was almost as if somebody was taking the roof off my home."

"Over the years I've always said 'Put a blue rosette on a monkey and I'll always vote for him', but now I am putting Temple-Morris on a lower plank than a monkey. I feel I couldn't vote for him ever again. He unleashed a fury the intensity of which astounded me, and now he is out to save his own skin."

Mr Tebbitt said that he had not discussed the issue with his

brother Norman, but he shared the former cabinet minister's political views.

Earlier this month, Mr Temple-Morris was given a vote of confidence by his local party's executive committee. The MP, who has a 14,000 majority, said yesterday that he had consulted local party officials throughout the leadership election.

"I wasn't pulling any punches as to what I was doing," he said. "The people trying to unseat me are ultra-Thatcherite and think it wrong that she was deposed. They then look around for someone to blame - and blame me. If my critics are right, they are really the apostles of dictatorship."

The MP said that he would not resign even if he lost tomorrow's vote and the issue was referred to the executive committee, which has expressed confidence in him.

Life after Thatcher, page 6

Leap towards greening of Whitehall as officials meet

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE greening of Whitehall took a big step forward at the weekend, when almost 40 senior officials from ten government departments, including six permanent secretaries, met to discuss the environment.

Led by Sir Patrick Wright, head of the diplomatic service, and Sir Terence Heiser, permanent secretary at the environment department, they discussed ways in which the government machine could respond better to national and international problems such as the threat of global climate change, in terms of organisation and the amount of money needed to do the job.

The two-day seminar at Wiston House, a Foreign Office conference centre near Steyning, West Sussex, was the most important internal meeting that the civil service has held on green issues

and, two years ago, would have been inconceivable. The range and high level of the participants is evidence that the environment is now a cross-departmental issue, which was one of the main aims of the environment white paper produced in September by Chris Patten, then environment secretary.

As well as the two chairmen, permanent secretaries present included Sir Alan Bailey (transport), Sir Christopher France (health), Derek Andrews (agriculture) and Timothy Lankester (overseas development administration), plus teams of interested advisers. The Treasury, the Cabinet Office, the Department of Trade and Industry and the energy department were all represented at deputy secretary level.

The whole corpus of senior officials with environmental responsibilities scattered across Whitehall had come together informally to discuss how to liaise better, instead of "glaring at each other across a committee table", as one of them put it. High on the agenda was the machinery needed to ensure that the integration of the environment into the policies of other departments, as outlined in the white paper, is fulfilled.

Its principal element will be the cabinet committee on the environment, set up under the chairmanship of Margaret Thatcher to decide the content of the white paper. That committee, originally named Misc 141, has been renamed Gen 4, and the change from miscellaneous to general is indicative of its new status: important and permanent.

Most of the cabinet will be members. It will be chaired by the prime minister and meet as and when required. A subsidiary committee called Gen 7 will be chaired by Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary.

An important role will also be played by the Treasury-backed interdepartmental group on environmental economics (Iggy), which will discuss pollution taxes and other market mechanisms. It will be run by Rachel Lomax, the government's new deputy chief economic adviser, who will chair her first meeting in the new year.

The conference was the idea of the Foreign Office, which has been quick to appreciate what an important issue the environment has become for diplomacy.

Law 'must enforce green duty'

A STATUTORY duty of environmental care should be laid against all government departments, local authorities and public bodies, two academics say in a blueprint for greening the government machinery (OU Environment Correspondent writes).

It would provide the basis for scrutiny and enforcement of the new green responsibilities Whitehall departments are being given, according to Professors Tim O'Riordan and Albert Wheale of East Anglia University.

They say: "Just as government departments have been expected to be accountable for the spending of public monies since the 17th century, so their modern counterparts should be made accountable for their use of natural resources and environmental amenities that represent our common heritage."

The professors say the duty would take account of the sustainable use of natural resources, the minimisation of waste, the principle that the polluter should pay for pollution, and the acceptance of a precautionary approach.

Greening The Machinery of Government (Friends of the Earth, £2.50)

Turn from the gun, Primate tells IRA

THE new pastoral leader of Ireland's 3.8 million Roman Catholics yesterday told the IRA to call off its terror campaign, and said that its objectives could be achieved through peaceful political progress.

With Mary Robinson, the Republic's new president, listening, Dr Cahal Daly called on republicans to turn from the gun and the bomb. The peaceful transformation of eastern Europe was primarily a spiritual and moral revolution, he said, and achieved by peaceful means what armed uprising never could.

Dr Daly, who was being installed as Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, told the IRA leadership: "You have no sane reason or justification - moral, rational or political - for continuing with your campaign of violence. You have every reason - moral, rational and political - for calling off your campaign now."

"The longer you continue with your campaign of violence, the more ignominious in the end will be the memory you will leave behind you, and the further away from attainment will be any of your aims and objectives."

Dr Daly, aged 73, said that there were people in both communities whose consciences were "blinded" to prevent them seeing the enormity of their violent deeds.

He also spoke of his hopes for the Birmingham Six, saying: "I can see no sustainable reason why their convictions should continue to stand, or why they should not quickly be vindicated and released." There was a sustained applause when Dr Daly welcomed Mrs Robinson on her first official visit to Northern Ireland.

Leading Protestant churchmen and Charles Haughey, Ireland's prime minister, were among hundreds who gathered in St Patrick's cathedral, Armagh, for the installation ceremony. Members of Mr Haughey's cabinet, four cardinals and bishops from Britain, Europe, the United States, Nicholas Fenn, the British Ambassador to the Republic, Cardinal Basil Hume, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, and David Sheppard, Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, also attended.

Northern Ireland politicians present included Ken Maginnis, Unionist MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the SDLP and MP for Newry and Armagh.

Bad weather complicated Mrs Robinson's first official visit to the north. The initial plan was for her to be flown in an Irish Air Corps helicopter to Drumadarragh on the edge of the city, and to be met there by Mr Brooke. Instead, she arrived some 40 minutes late by road to be greeted at the offices of the Armagh Observatory - which was founded by an Anglican archbishop of Armagh and has celebrated its bicentenary this year.

It had also been planned that she would also visit Navan Fort, the pre-historic earthwork on the edge of the city and the seat of the ancient kings of Ulster.

The bad weather, however, prevented Mrs Robinson from making the visit. Instead, she had to settle for a detailed briefing and a video of what is planned for the fort, by Dr Gordon Beveridge, vice-chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast and chairman of the Navan Trust.

Photograph, page 1



Rarity value: a five shilling stamp among the collection of 10,000 Lord Spens is putting up for auction

Stamps sale to pay legal bills

By PAUL WILKINSON

LORD Spens, the one-time high-flying merchant banker, has taken a last look at a flawed 1958 five shilling postage stamp of Caernarfon Castle, the jewel of his private collection, which is to be auctioned tomorrow.

The stamp, valued at £120 because of its so-called confetti mark near the Queen's head, is one of a unique portfolio of about 10,000 stamps, all from the "Castle" series of high-value British definitives issued from 1958 until decimalisation in 1971. They are being sold to pay legal bills run up

by Lord Spens in defending charges of fraud during the Guinness affair. Although granted legal aid last week, Lord Spens says he faces bills of £300,000 in fighting the charges brought in connection with the £2.7 billion takeover by Guinness of the Distillers drinks group in 1986.

Brian Reeve, the auctioneer who will conduct the sale at the Charing Cross hotel in central London tomorrow, said: "It is a rare collection; something that comes up only once in a lifetime. He has put estimates on its sale value of £36,000, but Lord Spens hopes it will go for far more. Lord

Spens, aged 48, said: "It is heartbreaking to have to sell a collection I have spent 30 years building up, but the lawyers must be paid."

The Baron, as he is known in the City, faces two charges in the second half of the Guinness trial which is due to start at Southwark Crown Court in the new year. Lord Spens has been conducting his own case since he discharged his lawyers in April last year.

He will not be at the auction. "It would be too painful," he said, vowing to build another collection just as soon as the Guinness affair was finally ended.

Gulf call-up will safeguard jobs

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Queen is expected to sign an order in council this week for a call-up of reservists to serve in the Gulf. Two weeks ago, the defence ministry wrote to hundreds of reservists, mostly those with medical skills, asking them to volunteer because of the fear of heavy casualties in a war with Iraq, but many were reluctant to sign up because their employers have refused to guarantee keeping their jobs open.

A defence ministry official said yesterday that once a special order was signed, employers would have

no choice but to safeguard the jobs. He said about 500 had volunteered so far, but a total of about 1,000 would be needed.

When Tom King, the defence secretary, announced that reservists might be required, the impression given was that volunteers would serve in Britain or Germany, replacing those who had left for the Gulf. But it is now clear they will serve in the Gulf.

The decision to seek an order in council under the Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 was made because of increas-

ing signs recently that Iraq was preparing for war. Apart from extra medical help, the defence ministry is looking for specialists with other specialist skills, with intelligence and technical backgrounds a priority. Although the official call up will cover all reservists in the Territorial Army and the other two services, only selected personnel will be needed.

The special order will have to come before parliament before it can be put into effect.

Peace setback, page 9

£1m snowflake has punters in a flutter

By ALAN HAMILTON

HAD Bing Crosby never recorded that confounded song, we should probably not give a crystallised Christmas fig whether snow fell in London on December 25. We do, however, stand to take more than £150,000 from the bookmakers if it does this year. According to the weathermen, though, it won't.

One of the world's most advanced weather forecasting computers, employed by the American weather service, predicts that the United Kingdom will enjoy a warmer than average Christmas Day, a little windy, with some sunshine in the east and showers in the west and north. Our own home-grown meteorolo-

gists tend to agree, except about the warmth. It will, they think, be cold but decidedly not white.

Should they be proved wrong, they will be the first to know. Angus Stronach, a young Met Office trainee, will spend his entire 12-hour Christmas Day shift on the roof of the London Weather Centre ready to spot even a single snowflake and to time its arrival to the second. His presence is required by Debenhams, the department store group, which is so chilled by the icy blasts blowing through high street retailing that it has launched a promotion inviting customers to predict the exact landing time of London's first Christmas snowflake. The winner

is promised a prize of £1 million. Debenhams' money looks relatively safe. Snow has fallen in London on Christmas Day only eight times this century, the last occasion being in 1976.

A vague feeling that a fresh fall is overdue, coupled with last week's burst of severe weather in many parts of the country, occasioned a rush to the bookmakers' counters. Two weeks ago they were offering up to 20-1 against, soon trimmed to 5-1. After one punter invested £500 last week, they were further shortened to 9-2.

What the punters require, according to the London Weather Centre, is a build-up of high pressure over Scandinavia. There

is, alas, no sign of it. But nothing is certain. Not much more than a month ago the country's amateur weather sages were united in their predictions of a hard winter. Oak trees were still wearing their leaves well into November, squirrels in East Anglia were seen struggling under bulk orders of nuts, and hares in the Fens were swarming in from what passes in that area of Cambridgeshire for high ground.

All are taken as signs of a hard winter, although it is asking too much of a Norfolk squirrel to predict whether snow will fall on a rooftop in central London on one particular and entirely arbitrary day in December. Squirrels are not, as a rule, Crosby fans.

Anti-hanging majority may rise

The Commons majority against restoring capital punishment may be even bigger in tonight's free vote than the margin of 123 in the last test of the issue in 1988 (Nicholas Wood writes).

Anti-hanging MPs believe that the judicial fallibility suggested by the cases of the Guildford Four, whose convictions for terrorist murders were overturned last year, and the Birmingham Six, whose case comes before the Court of Appeal today for an initial hearing, may prompt a change of heart among past supporters.

Letters, page 11

Prisoners on the run

Three prisoners, including a "highly dangerous" killer, were on the run yesterday after breaking out of Highpoint jail, Suffolk, from which 28 men escaped last year. The Home Office has admitted that more prisoners have escaped from Highpoint than any other jail. Four prisoners who escaped last month have still not been recaptured.

Police have warned the public not to approach the three men who were all said to be wearing prison clothes.

Decision on new bishop likely

John Major is expected to decide before Christmas on the new bishop of London to succeed Graham Leonard, a leading opponent of women's ordination. A shortlist was submitted last week.

The favourites are the moderate Right Rev John Weir, bishop of Chelmsford, and Dr David Hope, bishop of Wakefield. The right wing of the church hopes that Mr Major will choose someone to balance the evangelical Dr George Carey at Canterbury and the liberal Dr John Habgood at York.

Anti-semitism investigated

Prosecutions may still be brought against the authors of anti-semitic hate literature, the Board of Deputies of British Jews was told yesterday. Dr Lionel Kopelowitz, board president, said that reports that the attorney general will not prosecute in any of the 21 cases referred to him "does not accord with the information we have".

He said police were working very hard to collect evidence in several cases to enable prosecutions to be brought and the matter to be dealt with speedily.

Pilot's body found

The body of a second world war pilot was found on Saturday in a Spitfire unearthed by archaeologists at Hollingbourne, near Maidstone, Kent. The relatives of Sergeant Pilot Ernest Scott, a member of 222 Squadron who was shot down over Kent during the Battle of Britain, said they were certain that the fighter was his.

Gas attack

Nineteen people were being treated in hospital in Ballymena, Co Antrim, last night for the effects of inhaling gas from a cylinder thrown on to a crowded dance floor on Saturday night. Meanwhile at Newry, Co Down, nine people including five children were held hostage at gunpoint by armed and masked men in a house while terrorists mounted two elaborate proxy car bomb hoaxes on an army base and post office in the border town.

Fake £20 notes

Shoppers and traders were told yesterday to beware of counterfeit £20 notes. The notes, which have been found in Wiltshire, have a watermark of the Queen instead of Shakespeare and green edge markings are missing.

Marriage troubles

Charles Haughey, the Irish prime minister, has told civil servants to draft a white paper on marital breakdown in the Republic. Government sources say that a referendum on legalising divorce may be held in 1992.

By the way, the Times overseas editions are published in the following countries: Australia: Sydney, £5.00; New Zealand: Auckland, £5.00; Canada: Toronto, £5.00; USA: New York, \$10.00; Mexico: Mexico City, \$10.00; Central America: San Jose, \$10.00; Caribbean: Kingston, \$10.00; South America: Rio de Janeiro, \$10.00; Africa: London, £5.00; Middle East: London, £5.00; Europe: London, £5.00; Asia: London, £5.00; Oceania: London, £5.00.

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Shops flout Sunday trading laws to beat sales slump

By ELAINE FOOG

SOME of the biggest high street trading names openly flouted Sunday trading laws yesterday in an attempt to reverse plummeting sales before Christmas.

Even Hamleys, the largest and oldest toy shop in the world, in Regent Street, London, opened yesterday, in spite of being fined £800 last week by Westminster city council for Sunday trading in October 1989.

With most shops experiencing their worst trading period in ten years, stores throughout the country were prepared to face the risk of being fined rather than keep their doors shut. For some, the decision contradicted head office policy stating that shops would remain closed.

At Hamleys, trading was reported to be on the "soft side", with the store only managing to equal last year's

figures for the same period. Duncan Chadwick, chief executive of Hamleys, said yesterday that the toy shop would open all the extra hours possible, up to 9pm six days a week if necessary.

"Three people from the shop workers union, Usdaw, were picketing outside the shop this morning in protest against us opening. We offered them tea, they refused and then ran off," he said.

Mr Chadwick added that Hamleys was hoping the council would turn a blind eye to Sunday trading. "It is clear that the act needs reforming, in places like Scotland and the States there are a higher percentage of churchgoers than in England, and yet trading is legal in these places."

He said that the shop, which first opened in 1762, had presented overwhelming evi-

dence to the council that it should be treated as a resort area, and thus be exempt from the Sunday trading laws, but that the argument had been rejected by Westminster.

If Hamleys had been closed last Sunday, Mr Chadwick added, the store could not have raised £4,000 for the relief fund for Romania in a special charity day organised by the toy shop.

In London's jewellery stores, customers were scarce. Ratners and H.Samuel in Kensington High Street were open. H.Samuel said that it was planning to close at 4pm, but would stay open longer if people were in the shop.

Ratners in Birmingham, when asked if the shop would be open, said: "We are certainly on the premises today." When told that the enquiry was from a newspaper, the shop strenuously denied that staff were there to serve customers. "We are here putting stock away after Saturday," a spokesman said.

British Home Stores (BHS) said 100 out of 138 branches were open yesterday, with the store expecting a late Christmas surge of shoppers. "We are putting our customers first at Christmas time," a spokeswoman said. "All staff who are working today are doing so voluntarily. They are being given two days off in lieu. Our Oxford Street store was over-subscribed by staff wanting to work."

At the Woolworth store in Birmingham, the manager, who wished to remain anonymous, said that his head office was "all for" Sunday opening. When asked whether he was concerned about flouting the law, he said: "It does not bother me. The company will cover us." A spokeswoman for Woolworth's head office declined to comment.

In the Birmingham branch of BHS, many of the staff questioned were part-time women employees happy to get a few hours' extra work. In Manchester, BHS, Ratners, HMV and Athena stores were all open. Staff said they were not forced to work on Sunday and were happy to earn extra money for Christmas.

However, local authorities yesterday reacted strongly to the news that shops were opening on Sunday. In Sheffield, where Woolworth, BHS and H.Samuel all opened, Bill Franklin, chairman of the city's chamber of trade, said he would be urging the council to uphold the law.

Martin Flannery, Labour MP for Hillsborough, said: "The shops should be kept closed and those that open should be heavily fined. What gives them the right to decide which laws to observe and which to break?"

David Blackmore, operations director of Keep Sunday Special, the pressure group, said: "I cannot think that their overheads will be covered by this expensive farce. All they are doing is taking a market share from the law-abiding majority."

Mr Blackmore said local authorities should take out injunctions against shops that break the Sunday trading laws. "This is much quicker than magistrates' court and it is easier to recover costs. We are aware that, in the past six weeks, at least 50 authorities have managed to get injunctions against shops who are breaking the law," he said.

Relocation plan for tower's armour

By JOHN YOUNG

PLANS to improve facilities for visitors at the Tower of London, which would include moving most of the collection of armour to a new museum in the north of England, are to be submitted to the environment department.

Guy Wilson, Master of the Royal Armouries, said that the idea was to retain only those items that related to the tower's history. The space created would be used for tableaux, working displays of historic crafts, and somewhere for visitors to eat.

"At present there is nowhere within the whole complex where you can get so much as a cup of tea," he said. "What's worse, apart from the tours conducted by the yeoman warders, people get very little opportunity to learn about the history of the tower, which is an amazingly rich and fascinating story."

Although the tower is by far the biggest tourist attraction in Britain, its facilities and presentation are widely considered to be unsatisfactory. Many visitors are thought to go away confused about what they have seen and unable to place it in a historical context.

One reason is the sheer amount of armour, little more than a tenth of which is displayed in the White Tower and the 19th century New Armouries building and oriental gallery. The rest of it occupies space that could be used for other exhibits.

The plan is to move the bulk of it out of London. The Sheffield development corporation is keen to open a museum as part of the rehabilitation of the Don Valley and has been offered first refusal. A market research study is planned to discover the public's opinion of the proposals.

AGENDA

The week ahead

Today MPs vote on bringing back hanging. CBI monthly trends survey published. Hospital doctors meet Virginia Bottomley, health minister, to discuss working hours. Birmingham Six pre-trial hearing begins at Court of Appeal.

Tomorrow Public sector borrowing requirement figures for November announced. Kenneth Baker, home secretary, and Chris Patten, Conservative party chairman, attend crime prevention conference. MPs launch food aid for Russia. Launch of BBC television winter plans.

Wednesday Unicef publishes report on the state of the world's children. Gross domestic product figures for third quarter announced. Children of Courage awards presented.

Thursday Commons and Lords adjourn for Christmas break. John Major makes first visit to Washington as prime minister. November's money supply figures announced. Last pit in the Rhondda Valley closes at Maerdy. Marilyn Monroe's marriage certificate for auction at Christie's.

Friday Building societies' figures for November announced. Balance of payment figures for November announced. Second anniversary of Lockerbie disaster.

Saturday Crisis, charity for the homeless, opens its Christmas shelter. Prime minister returns from US.

Sunday Christmas drink-driving

Pub bombs case heads for full hearing

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE Director of Public Prosecutions is expected to argue for a full hearing of the Birmingham Six case when the Court of Appeal holds a preliminary hearing on the case today. The court will be told that more work has yet to be done on the enquiry being carried out by Devon and Cornwall police.

Earlier this month Allan Green, QC, Director of Public Prosecutions, said that he wanted the Court of Appeal to review all the evidence before deciding whether the convictions are safe. Legal sources say his position has not changed.

The case was referred back to the Court of Appeal this autumn after scientific evidence showed alterations to a statement alleged to have been made by Richard McKenny, one of the Six. It is understood that the tests have now disclosed that a number of documents were altered or replaced.

The questions thrown up by the tests, known as electrostatic deposition analysis, or ESDA, may be one of the reasons for the DPP's caution. The police enquiry could be checking reasons for the alterations or seeking extra tests.

Today's hearing, before Lords Justice Lloyd, Mustill and Farguharson, is expected to be followed by a full hearing early next year. Meanwhile the Six will remain in prison convicted of IRA bomb attacks on two public houses in which 21 people died.



Green: wants all the evidence reviewed

£25m plan 'threat to poet's village'

By HENRY STANHOPE

RESIDENTS of an old Welsh fishing village which helped to inspire Dylan Thomas when he wrote *Under Milk Wood* are campaigning against a property development which they say would destroy the character of their seaford.

Detailed plans are due to be submitted today by the property developers Bright and Pepper who want to reclaim more than five acres of sea at Mumbles, at the foot of the Gower peninsula, southwest Wales. Shops, luxury flats, a night club, a wine bar, a swimming pool, saunas and jacuzzis are among the facilities to be provided in the £25 million four-storey complex.

More than 2000 locals have signed a petition against the proposal and 97 per cent voted against it in a referendum. They claim that it would bring noise and traffic chaos to the quiet little Victorian resort, and would spoil their views over Swansea Bay, famous for Mumbles lighthouse and the "fishing-boat bobbing sea" which inspired Dylan Thomas. Susan Walker, a Liberal Democrat who has led opposition to it on Swansea city council, said: "It would be an eyesore besides which

Prince Charles' 'monstrous carbuncle' would seem like a mere pimple. Mumbles needs more open space for public enjoyment, not this fantastical enterprise designed to make money for the developers."

Bryan Evans, the managing director of Bright and Pepper, has accused the objectors of being elderly bigots. He said: "The place badly needs new investment and the silent majority are behind my proposal."

The public gallery was crowded when the Bright and Pepper plan was approved in principle last June at a meeting of Swansea city council. It was carried with the support of the ruling Labour group despite opposition from Liberal Democrats and Conservatives.

There is general agreement that the site needs changes, and a subcommittee of Mumbles community council has drawn up a more environmentally friendly plan, but lacks the £4 million to proceed. If Mr Evans and his board gain planning permission local people say they will call on David Hunt, the Welsh secretary, to intervene with a public enquiry.



A break for one shopper yesterday in British Home Stores, Oxford Street

US navy denies part in new trawler mishap

By KERRY GILL

THE US Navy denied last night that one of its nuclear submarines fouled the nets of an Ulster fishing boat off the Mull of Kintyre.

An investigation of claims by the skipper of the Green Eagle showed that the unnamed US submarine was on the surface on Thursday and never came closer than a mile to any trawler, the US Navy said in a statement from its submarine base at Holy Loch, on the Clyde.

The skipper had said the nets were sagged and that later he had seen the submarine near his boat.

Meanwhile, new regulations governing submarine operations in the Firth of Clyde come into force today to prevent a repetition of the kind of accident in which the Antares fishing boat was sunk last month with the loss of four Scottish fishermen.

Under a notification scheme ordered by the government, almost 20 sectors within the firth have been drawn up in which submarines can carry out underwater operations.

If a submarine intends performing underwater manoeuvres in a sector the operations room at the Royal Navy's Faslane base on the Gair Loch will be required to pass on the information to the coastguard headquarters at Greenock. The coastguard will then broadcast the information every four hours to fishing boats, telling them which sectors are being used and for how long.

Fishermen will be able to operate in all other sectors knowing that there will be no submarines in those areas, a Royal Navy spokesman said

yesterday. While the move was welcomed by fishermen, George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, called for the area to be extended around the British and Irish coasts where submarines operated, and Patrick Stewart, secretary of the Clyde Fishermen's Association, also said that members of his association who fished in waters not covered by the code wanted it extended. "We believe it can be extended to the northern Irish Sea and the waters off the west of Scotland. We fully support this and we wish to see the agreement extended to any areas where submarines operate together with fishing boats," he added.

The Royal Navy yesterday declined to comment on a newspaper report that HMS Trenchant ignored standing instructions on the night when it was thought to have dragged down the Antares with the loss of her four-man crew.

A spokesman at the Royal Navy's Faslane submarine base on the Clyde said the service could not comment because the Navy board of enquiry into the incident was still under way.

The Royal Navy has said the submarine surfaced after hearing an unexplained noise, and after trying unsuccessfully to contact nearby fishing vessels, alerted coastguards before departing two hours later.

Commenting on the claim that the HMS Trenchant had broken regulations, Mr Foulkes said if there had been a breach of standing orders the matter should be put before the Procurator Fiscal with a view to possible prosecution.

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Brilliant on board

By RAYMOND KENNEDY
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

GARY Kasparov, the chess champion, achieved the most brilliant victory so far in his defence against Anatoly Karpov in Lyons, France.

On Saturday night, Kasparov shattered his opponent's position after 41 moves of the Ruy Lopez opening. For the last ten movements of the game, Karpov's position on the board were complicated by a desperate shortage of time. When he resigned on the 41st move he had to reconstruct his own position from memory.

Kasparov now has a dominating lead of 11 points to nine with four games to go. To regain the title, Karpov would have to score three and a half points from the last four games - a virtually impossible task.

Kasparov played in a most dramatic style. He showed sacrifices on the board, first of a pawn, then a knight and a bishop. Finally, to eradicate Karpov's resistance, he sacrificed his queen on the 34th move. Kasparov's sacrifices at this level of play are rare and highly prized.

Afterwards Kasparov said: "I finally won a game in my old style." Paving tribute to his opponent's qualities, he added: "Karpov is a great fighter. He played the tactics to try and still win the match. After game 13 Karpov saw that I was not going to take unnecessary risks and that's why he decided to fight today, even though playing with black. Karpov doesn't care by how much he loses the match, all he wants to do is win."

Kasparov was buoyant as he gave the post-match interview. Karpov, however, was doubtless still believes that he can win. Four years ago during their championship match in Leningrad, Karpov, in a seemingly hopeless position, won three consecutive games and nearly tied the match. Karpov still has faith that he can repeat this feat.

The 20th game was the most striking seen in the match so far and its complexities troubled experts in the analysis room. The game will become

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Brilliant win puts Kasparov on brink of retaining title

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

GARY Kasparov, the world chess champion, achieved at the weekend the most brilliant victory so far in his title defence against Anatoly Karpov in Lyons, France.

On Saturday night, Kasparov shattered his opponent's position and forced him to resign after 41 moves of the Ray Lopez opening. For the last ten moves of the game, Karpov's problems on the board were compounded by a desperate shortage of time. When he resigned on the 41st move he had to reach over and take his opponent's written record of the game to reconstruct his own score sheet.

Kasparov now has a dominating lead of 11 points to nine with four games left. To regain the title, Karpov would have to score three-and-a-half points from these last four games — a virtually impossible task.

Kasparov played in his most dramatic style. He showed sacrifices on the black position, first of a pawn, then a knight and a bishop. Finally, to eradicate Karpov's resistance, he sacrificed his queen on the 34th move. Queen sacrifices at this level of play are rare and highly prized.

Afterwards Kasparov said: "I finally won a game in my old style." Paying tribute to his opponent's qualities, he added: "Karpov is a great fighter. He played the only tactic to try and still win the match. After game 19 Karpov saw that I was not going to take unnecessary risks and that's why he decided to fight today, even though playing with black. Karpov doesn't care by how much he loses the match, all he wants to do is to win."

Kasparov was buoyant as he gave the post-match interview. Karpov, however, doubtless still believes that he can win. Four years ago during their championship match in Leningrad, Karpov, in a seemingly hopeless position, won three consecutive games and nearly tied the match. Karpov still has faith that he can repeat this feat.

The 20th game was the most striking seen in the match so far and its complexities baffled experts in the analysis room. The game will become



Gary Kasparov back at the chess board yesterday after his superb win on Saturday

one of the masterpieces to rank with those such as Anderssen's win against Kieseritzky in London in 1851, or Botvinnik's win against Capablanca in Rotterdam in 1938.

Unlike great attacking players of the past, Kasparov's

position during his offensives is often exposed in some other part of the battlefield. Thus, in this game, a black pawn penetrated to the 7th rank, and for the last 15 moves of the game was just one square away from becoming a queen.

The element of extreme danger to himself is what characterises Kasparov's attacking strategy and differentiates it from that of previous world champions. The game was a duplicate of game four from this match until Kasparov deviated with a new idea on the 18th move. On the 23rd move he sacrificed a pawn in order to aim his pieces directly at the black king. On move 26 Kasparov sacrificed a knight to strip away the black king's defences, but Karpov would have lost instantly had he accepted the sacrifice. Instead, the former world champion lunged at a white bishop on the opposite side of the board.

On the 29th move Kasparov had virtually every piece lined up against the black king and it was his queen's sacrifice on the 34th

move that will ensure this game's place in the history of chess.

Kasparov (White)
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Bc7 4 d4 exd4 5 Nxd4 Nf6 6 Nc3 Bb4 7 Bc4 Nxd4 8 Qxd4 Qc7 9 e5 d6 10 Bb5 Bc7 11 Nc3 Nf6 12 d5 Nd7 13 Bc4 Bc7 14 e6 fxe6 15 Bb5 Bc7 16 Nc3 Nf6 17 Bc4 Bc7 18 e6 fxe6 19 Bb5 Bc7 20 Nc3 Nf6 21 Bc4 Bc7 22 Bb5 Bc7 23 Bb5 Bc7 24 Bb5 Bc7 25 Bb5 Bc7 26 Bb5 Bc7 27 Bb5 Bc7 28 Bb5 Bc7 29 Bb5 Bc7 30 Bb5 Bc7 31 Bb5 Bc7 32 Bb5 Bc7 33 Bb5 Bc7 34 Bb5 Bc7 35 Bb5 Bc7 36 Bb5 Bc7 37 Bb5 Bc7 38 Bb5 Bc7 39 Bb5 Bc7 40 Bb5 Bc7 41 Bb5 Bc7 42 Bb5 Bc7 43 Bb5 Bc7 44 Bb5 Bc7 45 Bb5 Bc7 46 Bb5 Bc7 47 Bb5 Bc7 48 Bb5 Bc7 49 Bb5 Bc7 50 Bb5 Bc7

Karpov (Black)
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Bc7 4 d4 exd4 5 Nxd4 Nf6 6 Nc3 Bb4 7 Bc4 Nxd4 8 Qxd4 Qc7 9 e5 d6 10 Bb5 Bc7 11 Nc3 Nf6 12 d5 Nd7 13 Bc4 Bc7 14 e6 fxe6 15 Bb5 Bc7 16 Nc3 Nf6 17 Bc4 Bc7 18 e6 fxe6 19 Bb5 Bc7 20 Nc3 Nf6 21 Bc4 Bc7 22 Bb5 Bc7 23 Bb5 Bc7 24 Bb5 Bc7 25 Bb5 Bc7 26 Bb5 Bc7 27 Bb5 Bc7 28 Bb5 Bc7 29 Bb5 Bc7 30 Bb5 Bc7 31 Bb5 Bc7 32 Bb5 Bc7 33 Bb5 Bc7 34 Bb5 Bc7 35 Bb5 Bc7 36 Bb5 Bc7 37 Bb5 Bc7 38 Bb5 Bc7 39 Bb5 Bc7 40 Bb5 Bc7 41 Bb5 Bc7 42 Bb5 Bc7 43 Bb5 Bc7 44 Bb5 Bc7 45 Bb5 Bc7 46 Bb5 Bc7 47 Bb5 Bc7 48 Bb5 Bc7 49 Bb5 Bc7 50 Bb5 Bc7

Move 41: Karpov resigns

Blackmail aftermath plaguing food firms

By BILL FROST

THE former detective who has been convicted of a £3.75 million blackmail plot against Heinz and Pedigree Petfoods will be sentenced at the Central Criminal Court today.

Rodney Whitchole, aged 43, was found guilty of 12 charges of demanding money with menaces. The jury, which delivered its verdict on Saturday, cleared him of four other charges of intending to harm children with baby food that had been contaminated with poison and broken razor blades.

The effects of Whitchole's plot continue to be felt in the food industry, by retailers and consumers. One hundred million jars of baby food with a retail value of £32 million were taken from supermarket shelves and destroyed at the height of the scare. Inevitably, the losses led to higher prices.

In an attempt to thwart the plot, expensive packaging techniques were introduced. New stock was, and still is, protected by tamper-proof shrink wrapping. Such packaging is costly and the shopper has paid the price.

Sophisticated surveillance systems were introduced in many supermarkets during the blackmail campaign. Cameras were installed and thousands of man hours were spent checking and re-checking shelves for contaminated products.

A wave of copy cat extortion attempts followed the news of Whitchole's plot, and Cow and Gate had to destroy millions of jars of baby food. Hoaxers also plagued the food industry as his campaign continued.

Several threats were reported after the start of his trial. Manufacturers and retailers fear that there will be more. Every threat has been followed by exhaustive checks.

Copies of letters sent by Whitchole to food companies spoke of his confidence that he would never be caught. He wrote to John Hinch, managing director of Heinz: "We are about to return with a vengeance. Next time it will be potassium cyanide in your tamper-proof jars."

Whitchole said he was not bluffing over the threat to contaminate more supplies of baby food. "An infant's death will be another statistic as far as we are concerned, but we ensure that we are not ignored. We will continue until there is public uproar and further massive publicity," he wrote.

The former detective told Heinz that if his letter was passed on to police payment would be blocked. "The only way to prevent us is to pay us," he wrote. "If we are to be prosecuted for murder, we might as well deserve it, but we are confident we will never be caught."

There is no doubt that Whitchole's campaign of "consumer terrorism" has cost the food industry dear. It has affected profits, damaged the image of some of the most trusted names on supermarket shelves and permanently increased shopping bills.

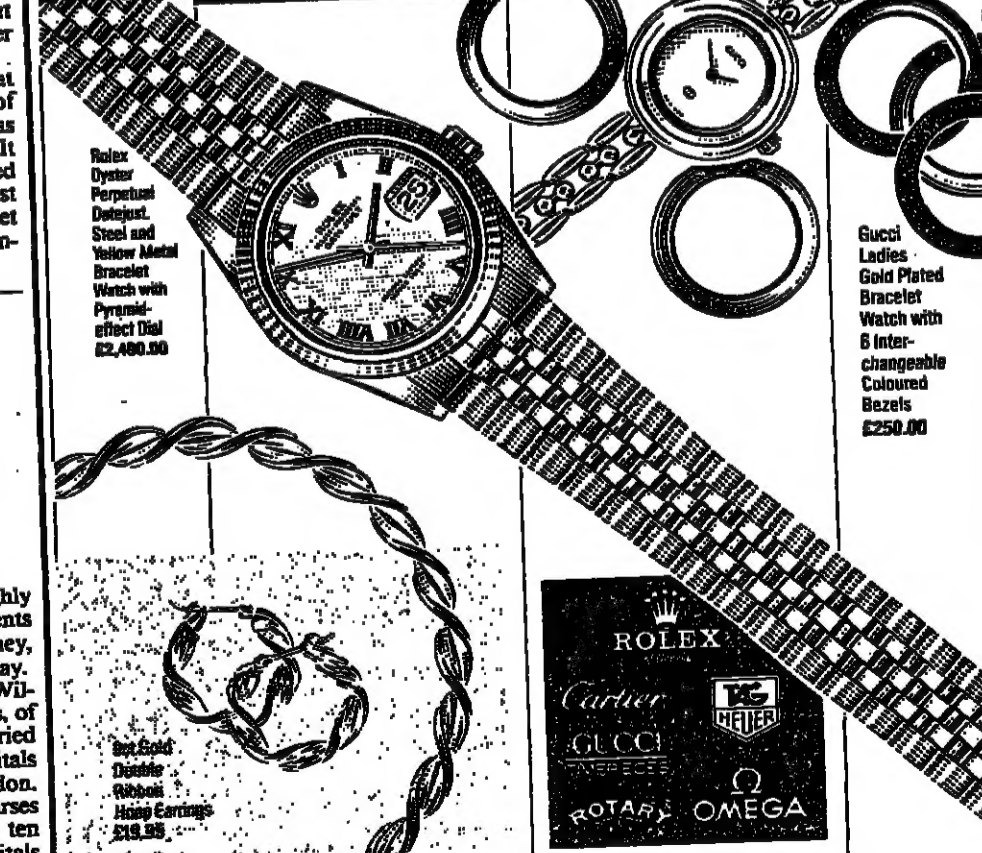
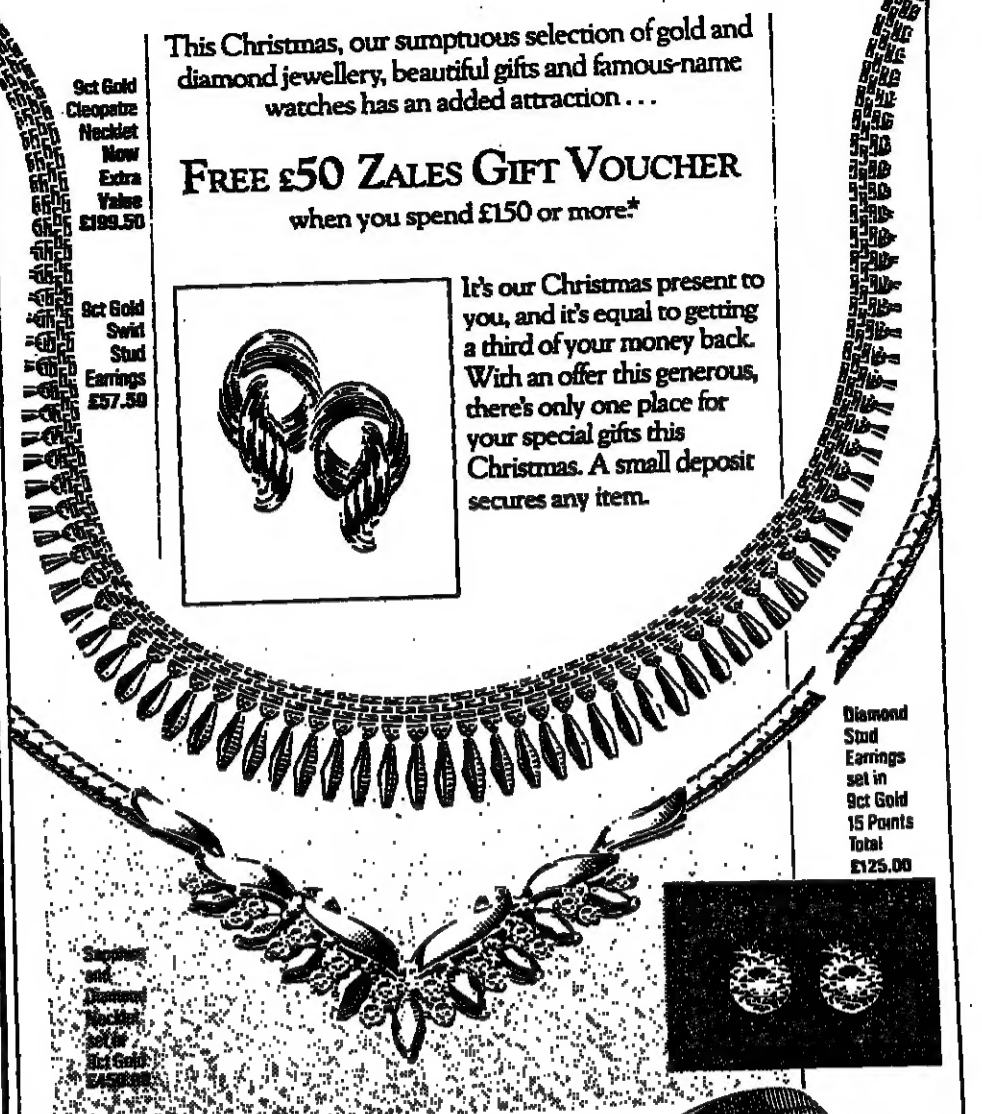
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Harrods

Articles on MP 'wrong'

THE Press Council today upholds complaints by Michael Mates MP, chairman of the Commons defence select committee, against two newspapers which questioned his links with defence firms.

It says articles in *Today* and the *Daily Mirror* wrongly said Mr Mates was benefiting from links with companies which were hoping for government defence contracts. A complaint by Mr Mates against the *Independent* on Sunday was rejected.

Playground body

A walker found a body hanging from a slide in a North Yorkshire children's playground on Saturday evening. The body of Wayne Clifford, aged 17, of Bedford Street, Scarborough, was found in the town's Manor Road park. Police said that there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death.

Sheep riddle

Police are baffled by the appearance of a flock of 42 sheep in the grounds of the country mansion of Charles Hambro, the banker. Nobody has any idea where the sheep came from before they were found grazing in the grounds of Dixton Manor at Gotherington, near Cheltenham.

Bond winners

Winners in the weekly National Savings Premium Bond prize draw are £100,000 bond number 21KT 915232, London borough of Wandsworth; £50,000, 19PF 226482, Exeter; £25,000, 20DP 160373, Southampton.

Reassuring talks speed recovery from operations

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PREPARING patients psychologically for surgery reduces post-operative pain and the length of stay in hospital, the British Psychological Society will be told today.

A survey of studies done over the past 25 years has produced "quite persuasive" evidence that patients who are prepared for surgery fare better, feel less pain, need fewer painkillers and are discharged from hospital sooner, Marie Johnson, of St Andrews university, will tell the society. Dr Johnson identifies three kinds of preparation that have proved their value. The first is information about what the patients are going to feel. A patient warned that he may feel a stabbing pain is less likely to worry about it than one who thinks it means that his surgery has gone wrong.

The second is guiding people to avoid pointless worries by encouraging them to think of other things, and the third is training in relaxation. These methods, Dr Johnson says, can have clear and quantifiable benefits to patients.

More than 700 psychologists are expected to attend the society's two-day London meeting at the City university to hear 150 papers and guest lectures from Stephen Dorell, the junior health minister, and Professor Colin Blakemore, of Oxford university. The meeting will include a session on the psychological impact of disasters such as Lockerbie.

Doctors and nurses in hospitals do not wash their hands

often enough or thoroughly enough, and improvements would save lives and money, the society will be told today.

Peter Stadel, Emma Williams and Chris Bartokas, of Liverpool university, carried out a survey in two hospitals in Liverpool and London. Although doctors and nurses know that one patient in ten admitted to NHS hospitals acquires an infection unrelated to the reason for admission, and that the failure of medical staff to wash their hands is the most common cause, the researchers found it hard to improve hygiene.

They found that a high-profile poster campaign backed up literature improved knowledge but did not alter behaviour. More handwashing resulted only after a more intensive campaign with emotionally arousing posters and a video, but six months later, handwashing had fallen to its original levels.

Computer addicts may be shy, but they are as interesting, hospitable and fulfilled as anyone else, a psychologist says today in a paper to be presented to the meeting (Jill Sherman writes). Margaret Shotton of Nottingham university, says that people hooked on computers are not the neurotic, anti-social, "programming junkies" that society often imagines them to be. Dr Shotton says computer addicts are misunderstood people who have learned to mistrust humans and turned to the world of the inanimate.

Life after Thatcher

Major's men ditch the old taboos

NINETEEN days ago John Major took over from Margaret Thatcher as prime minister. The post-election euphoria that has since gripped Tory MPs shows no signs of abating as they prepare to leave Westminster for the Christmas holidays.

Even those on the right who are still emerging from mourning after their heroine's demise talk excitedly of the change of mood, the new listening government, the next election. It is an astonishing transformation and for Labour, which has done little wrong in recent weeks, deeply perplexing.

Early indications have suggested changes of substance as well as style in the way Mr Major runs

his government. His decision to send Michael Heseltine to the environment department was the most glaring signal to Conservative MPs that he wants the community charge ditched in its present form. It was the flagship that sank the admiral, as one MP put it, and Mr Major is determined not to be a second victim.

It did not take him long to reverse completely Mrs Thatcher's policy on help to haemophiliacs infected with the Aids virus. He bowed swiftly to pressure from the public and his backbenchers to cancel a further £42 million should be paid. Mrs Thatcher and her previous health secretary had insisted that the matter be settled

Conciliation not confrontation is the new style emerging at Westminster. Policies once cast in iron are being remoulded under John Major's leadership, Philip Webster reports

by the courts. But William Waldegrave, the new health secretary, was able to announce: "A number of fresh minds came to look at this."

In Rome these past few days, European leaders have been getting accustomed to a British prime minister for whom confrontation is not a natural way of doing business. Mr Major set out to avoid the eleven-to-one conflicts that often left Mrs Thatcher

happily isolated at European summits. Mr Major knows only too well that it was Mrs Thatcher's behaviour at and after the October summit that was ultimately to prove her undoing. Pragmatic is becoming the overworked, but nevertheless accurate, adjective to describe the prime minister.

In the House of Commons the opposition parties are trying to come to terms with a man who offered during one of his first

question-times that most un-Thatcher-like observation that the chamber "need not necessarily be a perpetual cockpit of confrontation"; a man who cleverly authorised Mr Heseltine to make a headline-grabbing offer of all-party talks on the poll tax in the absence of any more concrete proposals so soon after his return to the environment department. Labour is desperately seeking a way to puncture Mr Major's

armour of competence. His unwillingness so far to expatiate on matters other than those with which he has become familiar during his career are leading them to question whether anything lies beneath it. He is not an easy target.

In the cabinet, too, the change has been palpable. At his first meeting in charge, Mr Major told ministers that he wanted them to pitch in on each other's subjects. After an era in which so many of the most important decisions were taken by Mrs Thatcher and small handfuls of her colleagues, it took some of them by surprise. "I will have to start reading my briefs now," one said privately. The Major government is enjoy-

ing a honeymoon period. How long it lasts could determine whether he decides to go to the polls next spring, summer, autumn or in 1992. The process of drawing up the election manifesto is in full swing. Mrs Thatcher set it in motion last July and the specialist committees are meeting regularly.

One consequence of her departure, as Sir Geoffrey Howe mused last weekend, is that areas which have been regarded as closed, topics that were regarded as unopenable, are now capable of re-examination. In the following analysis *Times* specialists examine where the changes might come over the next few months.

Heseltine gears for action as the shackles come off

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY, DOUGLAS BROOM AND CHRISTOPHER WARMAN

MARGARET Thatcher's departure provides the opportunity for Michael Heseltine to work on the foundations of an environment strategy which his predecessor laid but was not allowed to develop.

Chris Patten boldly tried to bring all of government policy into a grand green scheme, but Mrs Thatcher emasculated his white paper. After wavering, she supported Cecil Parkinson, John Wakeham and John Major as they fought off Mr Patten.

Mr Major, although likely to follow Mrs Thatcher in chairing the cabinet's environment committee, is not likely to prove such an immovable obstacle, giving Mr Heseltine a better chance of getting his agenda through.

He has called for a more radical policy to combat global warming, and would like the Thatcher-approved target of stabilising UK emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) at present levels by 2005 to be improved to a 10-20 per cent cut in emissions by the same date, although the public commitment in the white paper not to raise energy prices (apart from petrol) for several years may box him in.

After the bitterly-criticised de-

cision to break-up the Nature Conservancy Council, Mr Heseltine is known to be anxious to mend fences, and his future intentions will be evident in the generosity or otherwise of the funding he will shortly announce for the NCC's successor bodies for England, Scotland and Wales.

Mr Heseltine also sees opportunities for change in other areas. He is committed to the restructuring of local government, an issue forced off the agenda during Mrs Thatcher's premiership. He has called for the creation of single tier local government in place of the county and district structure, he wants to see far reaching changes in the way councils are run and has suggested the introduction of full-time, paid elected mayors.

Many leading cities have welcomed Mr Heseltine's suggestion that they be allowed to opt out of their counties to become all-purpose unitary authorities.

He has also suggested that councils wanting to exceed government spending targets should have to stand for re-election on the issue. That idea was rejected out of hand by Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet. The main housing initiatives

under the new environment team are likely to be an emphasis on inner city regeneration and a greater role for housing associations in providing affordable homes and tackling the issue of homelessness.

As chancellor, Mr Major spoke of the need to increase the supply of suitable building land. If suitable land means land in the countryside as well as in towns and cities there could be battles ahead, for Mr Heseltine has made clear that he is against large scale development in the countryside.

One of Mr Heseltine's main aims is to revitalise the commitment to inner cities which has been relegated to the background in the last year or so. He is determined that this time the initiative will be housing led and aimed at the "rotten" core of run-down urban areas. Such a policy suggests that he will not want to free much, if any, land for building in the green acres of the south.

The main issue facing Sir George Young, the new housing and planning minister, is that of homelessness, and he sees the voluntary housing movement, as the key to dealing with it.



Clean sweep: the caring cabinet wields a new broom as Major's team implements changes in substance and in style

Voucher plan given the cold shoulder

By DAVID TYTLER
EDUCATION EDITOR

JOHN Major sets particular importance in raising the status of teachers. It is likely, however, that he will leave more of the detail in winning back the initiative from Labour to his education secretary than Mrs Thatcher did to hers.

Mrs Thatcher, having been education secretary, concerned herself with the smallest detail. One of Kenneth Clarke's first acts as education secretary, was to say that education vouchers were irrelevant and that he would have nothing to do with them in spite of Mrs Thatcher's enthusiasm.

The status of teachers is high on the agenda and there is likely to be some improvement in pay although it will be targeted to improve the recruitment of staff in the shortage subjects and in rewarding the best teachers for their classroom skills. Mr Clarke has already said that he is pre-

pared to pay more provided he gets value for money.

Whatever his plans, in for example extending the number of opt-out schools or giving more day-to-day power to local authority-controlled schools, will be overshadowed by the review of the poll-tax. The biggest change of all would follow any decision to remove education from the local authorities and put it firmly in the hands of central government.

The first effect of the new regime is likely to be seen on the school playing fields following one of the prime minister's first ministerial changes, when he moved Robert Atkins, the sports minister, from the department of environment to education. Mr Major has made clear that he expects an improvement in the quality of sport in schools.

Hard line turned on its head

NHS

MARGARET Thatcher claimed that the NHS was safe in her hands but she constantly flirted with the expansion of private health care (Jill Sherman writes). John Major shares the view that the NHS should become more competitive and efficient. He does not, however, use private hospitals and is not likely to introduce further concessions there.

Last week, William Waldegrave, the new health secretary, emphasised the government's more conciliatory approach when he called for bridge building between doctors and politicians. He also said that the commercial approach to the health service should not be overdone. His attitude was in marked contrast to the confrontational line taken by Kenneth Clarke, his predecessor.

Mr Major will not backtrack on NHS reforms but will expect close monitoring of self-governing hospitals and will be more open to modifications than was Mrs Thatcher. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Major condoned relatively high spending increases on health in each of the past two years. As prime minister he is expected to support similar levels if tied to greater productivity and falling waiting times.

Pay awards of about 8.5 per cent for doctors and nurses are expected to be recommended by the pay review bodies next month and these will probably be honoured in full. Mr Major will not risk tinkering with the awards, as Mrs Thatcher has done for the past four or five years, in a possible election year.

ARTS

THERE is optimism that under the Major government the arts will be examined for their economic value rather than just their cost (Simon Tait writes). While culture will not move far up the government's agenda it is less likely to be the victim of rhetoric.

Britain was the only country to object, through the then arts minister David Mellor, to the inclusion at the Rome summit of a discussion on the scope of cultural union. It is significant that Tim Renton, his successor, has now welcomed it.

Previously, those in favour of a national lottery to provide funds for the arts dared barely whisper it in Whitehall, but the idea has serious currency now that the moral objection of Mrs Thatcher has gone.

Provincial theatres and museums are meanwhile anxiously watching Mr Heseltine's manoeuvring of the poll tax. When local authorities need to make cuts, it is often culture projects that are most vulnerable. The National Campaign for the Arts has been told, however, that the environment department will seriously consider its request that local arts budgets be protected. It is unlikely to have elicited such a response three weeks ago.

SCIENCE

SCIENTISTS have few grounds for feeling optimistic. Unlike Mrs Thatcher, who was proud of her scientific training and held high-level seminars in Downing Street, Mr Major has no background in science (Nigel Hawkes writes).

He is expected to be just as tough as was Mrs Thatcher on public spending, while directing more money to the disadvantaged. This, some senior scientists fear, will leave less for Kenneth Clarke, the secretary for education and science, to devote to research and development.

HOME AFFAIRS

THE arrival of John Major at 10 Downing Street and Kenneth Baker at the Home Office is expected to move policy-making slightly to the left (Quentin Cowdry writes).

All the main political parties now agree that far fewer non-violent offenders should be jailed, that conditions in prisons should be improved and that police should work harder to justify increases in manpower. A Major-Baker axis on Home Office policy may increase this trend. Both also firmly oppose capital punishment in contrast to their immediate predecessors.

Mr Baker, the former Conservative chairman, has a splendid opportunity to carve a niche as a reforming home secretary, with Britain's unsalubrious jails providing the best ground over which to raise his standard. A ready-made reform agenda will shortly be landing on his desk in the form of Lord Justice Woolf's report into the spring jail riots. The frank way he accepted the Prisons Inspectorate's criticisms of Brixton jail may indicate that he will support the proposals.

Certainly, the early signs are that Mr Baker wants to make waves. He has already referred back to the appeal court the case of one of the three men convicted of the murder of PC Keith Blakelock during the Tottenham riot. Having been in the Home Office only a week he could have been forgiven for sitting on the case for a while. Instead, he took the file home on a Friday night and informed officials of his decision first thing on the Monday morning.

Value for money to be high on agenda

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

WITH Margaret Thatcher, there was never any question that Britain would retain an independent deterrent, that British forces would stay in Germany, albeit at a lower level, and that central Europe needed nuclear weapons.

While there is no expectation that John Major will be less committed, he starts from a different standpoint. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, his department was in the forefront of those looking eagerly for a peace dividend. He may be strong on defence, but possibly even stronger on having a defence policy that looks more cost conscious. The issues before the cabinet include:

● The replacement for the nuclear free-fall bomb: it will be expensive, probably costing over £1 billion, involving the purchase of an American system, the Ssm-T (short-range attack missile) or an Anglo-French missile.

Mr Major will probably back the programme but he might be converted to the Anglo-French option. It was felt Mrs Thatcher was more inclined to stay with the Americans on nuclear matters.

● The Chieftain tank replacement programme: the tanks being considered are the British Challenger 2, the American M1A1 Abrams, the German Leopard 2 and the French Leclerc. Mrs Thatcher never hinted at her

DEFENCE

preference but it is possible that Mr Major will be more sympathetic towards buying British, provided Challenger 2 proves to be a good tank.

● The options-for-change project: Mr Major is likely to listen more attentively to cabinet colleagues, such as the chancellor, if they call for more extensive cuts.

Help at hand for those in need

By JILL SHERMAN
SOCIAL SECURITY CORRESPONDENT

MARGARET Thatcher hardly admitted that the poor existed. She allowed incomes of the poorest groups to stagnate for ten years while the rest of the country grew 20 per cent richer.

John Major, a former social security minister, is expected to make early moves to correct this imbalance. Since becoming leader he has spoken of the need for a compassionate society.

It has already been rumoured that child benefit is to be reviewed again. Mr Major has recently reiterated his support for the universal benefit and is likely to

SOCIAL SECURITY

review the fund, change the proportion of grants and loans, and increase the overall sum available.

The disability bill going through Parliament has been criticised for not providing enough help for the disabled. Mr Major might endorse modifications to give the disabled, an increasingly high profile group, more help with living and transport costs.

Although Mr Major is unlikely to support another review of the benefit system, he might take note of recent criticisms from the government's social security advisers that benefit levels have not kept pace with increased water charges or the poll tax.

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Private schools should be opened up to all talented children, Tory MP says

By NICHOLAS WOOD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PRIVATE schools should be opened up to all children with the talent to benefit from them, a former Conservative higher education minister says today in an attack on standards of state education.

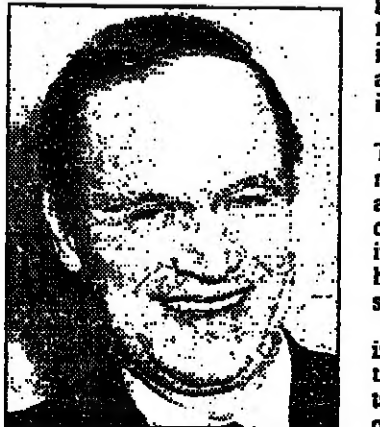
George Walden, a minister from 1985-7, calls for government subsidies for the private sector to end the "apartheid" between the two sectors, which he says could reduce many inner city children to the level of an "industrial peasantry".

The proposals would mean a massive extension of the assisted places scheme, which provides means-tested state scholarships for some poor children at independent schools, he said. "The concept of a privately operated school is rightly sacrosanct. The solution must be to offer them the opportunity, on a voluntary basis, of becoming autonomous schools within the state system."

"In return for direct financial support, private schools could open themselves up to all the talents... Every child in the land would then have a chance as of right to attend some of our best

private schools by demonstrating his or her attainments in competitive examinations."

In a paper published by the centre-left Tory Reform Group, Mr Walden says that Britain is at risk of becoming a "not-so-quiet backwater" on the margins of Europe unless obstacles to personal advancement in education, the constitution and political structures are removed. The most daunting obstacle to national revival is the education system. Much of the state service has



Walden: attack on standards of state education

become "alien territory" because so few government ministers make use of it.

Mr Walden, MP for Buckingham, also calls for high quality nursery education for all. Mortgage tax relief should be scrapped, he says, and the potential £7 billion savings put into education.

Meanwhile, the Tory Bow group has called for all tests for social security benefit which take people's capital savings into account to be abolished. In a pamphlet published today by the group, it says that an improvement in savings would allow a cut in interest rates without causing an inflationary increase in spending (Jill Sherman writes).

Julian Brazier, the author and Tory MP for Canterbury, says that restrictive tests on capital for assessing welfare payments are creating a savings trap. "Eligibility for many benefits is severely handicapped by the possession of savings," he says.

He wants a review of all income-tested benefits, to ensure that the combined impact of taxation and withdrawal of overlapping benefits does not trap the saver. His views may be considered sympathetically by

John Major, who emphasised the importance of extending savings throughout his leadership campaign.

Mr Brazier says that an average pensioner couple with a pension of £75.10 a week will keep £71.75 if they have £4,000 savings, after allowing for standard allowances, housing and community charge benefits. If the couple has £10,000 saved, however, they will only keep £52.55 a week.

The cost of abolishing capital tests would only be about £130m, he says. "The economic benefits from even a modest upturn in savings should be felt on the monetary investment and social fronts. Indeed, the resultant restraint in spending should far outweigh the fiscal cost in terms of impact on inflation."

Mr Brazier argues that countries with welfare systems which do not penalise savings by a withdrawal of benefit, such as Germany and France, have much higher savings levels than those that do, such as Britain and the United States.

The Savings Trap, Bow group, 92 Bishopsgate Road, London EC2A 4EJ.

Education, pages 14,15

Radon toll 'above the estimates'

By SHEILA GUNN
POLITICAL REPORTER

A COMMONS committee investigating indoor pollution has been told that deaths caused from inhaling the naturally occurring radioactive gas radon could be much higher than the official estimate of 2,500 a year. The environment department has told the Commons environment committee that the latest evidence shows that people living or working in radon-affected buildings face the greatest risks.

Dr Denis Henshaw, of the H.H.Wills Physics Laboratory, Bristol university, said that exposure to radon in the home could be causing leukaemia, skin, prostate and kidney cancers, and other cancers in children and not just lung cancer as was previously believed.

The National Radiological Protection Board estimates that about 100,000 homes are affected by potentially lethal levels of radon. Areas most at risk are in Devon and Cornwall and granite areas of Somerset, Northamptonshire and Derbyshire. The board blamed radon for causing one in 20 lung cancer cases.

Tebbit says cabinet guilty of desertion

BY OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE former Conservative party chairman Norman Tebbit accused the cabinet yesterday of deserting Margaret Thatcher during the challenge to her leadership and forcing her resignation.

Mr Tebbit, a senior member of Mrs Thatcher's campaign team during the contest with Michael Heseltine, said on Channel 4's *The Thatcher Factor*: "I was doing too much, but that was because not enough of the prime minister's colleagues in the cabinet were willing to make the time to campaign enthusiastically on her behalf."

Mrs Thatcher decided to resign after seeing members of her cabinet individually on the night of November 21. She was said to have been told by the majority of her ministers that although they would support her, they did not believe that she could beat Mr Heseltine in a second ballot. Mr Tebbit said, however, that it was the realisation that she would be leading a divided cabinet if she won that caused her departure.

"I think she began to realise at that point, that to win and be faced with a cabinet which had not firmly supported her would not

resolve the problem of her leadership, it would exacerbate it. I think that that was the real point which came to her during the evening of Wednesday when she decided she would not go ahead," he said.

Mr Tebbit's remarks will strengthen the belief that Mrs Thatcher was betrayed by her cabinet, but conspiracy theorists will also have to reckon with the countervailing view put forward on the same programme by Alan Clark and Chris Patten. Mr Clark, minister for defence procurement, said that at a meeting of ministers 24 hours earlier there was a majority view that Mrs Thatcher could not survive and Douglas Hurd was identified as the most suitable leadership candidate.

Mr Patten, the new Tory party chairman, said that cabinet ministers "gave her their best view" about the likely outcome of a second ballot. They wanted to avoid a humiliating result. "She was very disturbed, understandably, by the accumulation of views which she had received by that stage. She was enormously dignified. She was witty. It was, however, the most difficult discussion I have had with anybody."

Father and son jailed for murder of Mendes

FROM LOUISE BYRNE IN XAPURI, BRAZIL

AFTER the most important trial ever to take place in the Brazilian Amazon, rubber-tapper leaders embraced each other and wept as Dary Alves da Silva, aged 54, was found guilty by six votes to one of ordering the murder of a fellow rubber tapper, the well-known ecologist, Chico Mendes, in December 1988.

Alves's son, Darcy, aged 23, was found guilty of carrying out the murder. Before a packed and tense courtroom in Mendes's small home town of Xapuri, Judge Adair Longuini sentenced each man to 19 years in prison after nearly 15 hours of debates and jury deliberation.

On hearing the result, rubber-tappers outside the courtroom began singing in homage to the man who knew he was marked to die. His successor as leader of the rubber-tappers' trade union, Osmarino Amancio Rodrigues, told them: "It is time to celebrate, we have suffered too much and been persecuted for too long. Now we have to move ahead and call for justice for all those who are guilty."

The conviction, on what would have been Mendes's 46th birthday, is considered a victory. The maximum sentence allowed is 30 years, but if above 20 years the accused would have the right to a retrial. Mendes won international recognition for his efforts to preserve the rain forest. He was shot dead as he walked out of the back door of his house.

His death not only caused an international outcry, but marked the most audacious murder by the Alves family who, for more than 15 years, have instigated a reign of fear among the town's 5,000 inhabitants and in the surrounding region.

The trial marked the first time in 10 years of rural land conflict in Brazil that a mastermind behind a murder has been tried and convicted. Since 1964, 1,622 people have been murdered over land but only 21 investigations and trials have been completed.

After the verdict, Marcio Thomaz Bastos, lawyer for the Mendes family, said: "As well as Dary and Darcy, there were others who planned Mendes's death. The struggle to find the others must continue. This is the first step towards an end to impunity in Amazonia."

In the two years before Mendes died, the Alves family is alleged to have committed at least seven murders. The court heard that before 1974, when they moved to the state of Acre, the Alves family also ruled through fear in the town of Umuarama in Paraná state.

Alves senior is now to be taken back to Umuarama to stand trial there for the murder of a farmer in 1973. Euseu de Oliveira, the public prosecutor, told the five men and two women jurors that the reign of fear was now over in Xapuri and they were not to be afraid to convict the father and son. "I know of no case in Brazilian history of a juror being threatened and suffering while serving on a case. You will not be threatened. If by chance you are, come to the justice and I promise you that those who are guilty will be punished."

Several days before the trial began another member of the extended Alves family was taken into custody for allegedly sending death threat notes to Senhor Rodrigues. During the trial Senhor Rodrigues was guarded 24 hours a day by federal police agents, but now has only his rubber-tappers to protect him.

João Lucena Leal, the defence lawyer, explained Mendes's death by saying: "He who throws too many stones will find one eventually falls on his head." He added: "Osmarino will follow the same road, if he is not careful." It was announced before the case began that this lawyer is named four times in the Brazilian book, *Torture Never Ends*, as an alleged torturer of political prisoners during the military regime.

Abdus Sattar owns 28 rickshaws which he rents to pullers for 50 takas a day. He said that people felt more free now that Mr Ershad had gone, and he expects rickshaw art to start reflecting the desire for genuine democracy.

Meanwhile, Kader Siddiqi, a hero of Bangladesh's independence struggle against Pakistan, returned home from a 15-year exile yesterday to be welcomed by tens of thousands of supporters at Dhaka airport and pledged to help restore democracy.

Kukrit Pramoj, a former prime minister and leader of the Social Action Party, said that the prime minister's aides had insisted that all names for appointment to the new cabinet must be submitted by Friday, although the party which was the second largest in the outgoing coalition had arranged to discuss names the following day.

"When we asked, why the hurry," said Mr Kukrit, "they said they had to stick to the astrologer's advice. Before we could do anything, the new cabinet

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Judge Longuini sentencing Chico Mendes's killers to prison for 19 years



Democratic line-up: voters appeared somewhat wary as they queued in Port-au-Prince yesterday to vote in Haid's presidential elections. In 1987 the Tonton Macoute, henchmen of the ousted Duvalier dictatorship, killed 34 people when they shot or hacked down citizens outside polling booths

Hopeful Haitians endure long wait to cast a vote

FROM ALAN TOMLINSON IN PORT-AU-PRINCE

SHRUGGING off the nightmare of the election day night that shattered their democratic dreams in 1987, Haitians rose early yesterday to try again to elect a government of their choice.

An atmosphere of calm and security contrasted sharply with the terror of three years ago when former members of the Tonton Macoute, the brutal henchmen of the ousted Duvalier dictatorship, gunned and hacked down voters as they lined up at the polls.

"Today we have no fear," said one young man as he waited at dawn with 200 others for a sleepy night-watchman to unlock the gates of the school, only to find that the ballot boxes and voting papers had not been delivered on time.

Troops and police, who had stood by and watched as the killings erupted in 1987, were this time patrolling in force and assuring everyone of the complete collaboration of an army that inherited power and then tried to hang on to it in the aftermath of President "Baby Doc" Duvalier's flight into exile nearly five years ago.

An overnight curfew added to the sense of security and private cars were banned from the streets to pre-empt the kind of hit-and-run tactics used by saboteurs in the past. "I knew everything would be all right because even the dogs were quiet last night," said a woman who waited to vote at the Ecole Argentine, where 17 people were slaughtered in the worst incident of 1987. Back then, she recalled,



Carter: one of the 600 monitoring the polls

Several hours after the polls opened, not a shot had been fired, but in many parts of the capital neither had a vote been cast. By mid-morning, the lengthening queues were still not being delivered in some poor areas of the city.

"For me, this is the start of The Plan," said a music teacher, aged 74, who, like many impoverished Haitians, suspects that the authorities, in collusion with powerful

foreign interests and wealthy former Duvalierists, will somehow conspire to deny the predicted victory of Father Jean Bertrand Aristide, a popular but politically radical priest, whose late entry in the presidential race has swept aside the campaigns of most of the other 10 candidates in the field.

Only conservative Marc Bazin, the former banker regarded as the American choice, is seen as standing in the way of the fiery priest who has promised to sweep the last vestiges of Duvalierism from the country if he wins. The Duvalierists have vowed to stop him.

"In the bourgeois areas the polls are open, but in the slums they are closed," said an angry hotel worker who gave up after waiting in vain for hours to vote for Father Aristide.

"How can this happen?" asked an old man, fearing that his hopes of participating in at least one honest election in his lifetime would be frustrated again.

"The people are ready to vote, ready to risk their lives. They want change and at last they have their candidate. This cannot be happening."

TV go-ahead for World Service

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE BBC World Service is to expand into television news early next year with half-hour daily bulletins available via satellite to television and cable operators in 22 countries.

BBC TV Europe, which already broadcasts the best of BBC1 and BBC2 programmes 18 hours a day to seven million people in Europe, will now include the new World Service Television News programme. The BBC has set up an international subsidiary, BBC TV International, which will sell and distribute World Service Television News in both English and other languages, including German and Japanese. It will also take charge of scheduling and marketing the relaunched BBC TV Europe, which will also include English-language teaching programmes.

James Arnold-Baker, chief executive of BBC Enterprises, said: "BBC TV Europe and other cable and satellite relays have proved that there is a great appetite overseas for BBC television. In a short space of time, the audience has grown to nearly seven million households. Add to that the World Service's global reputation for authority and reliability, and BBC TV Inter-

national is set to be a major force in world broadcasting."

The World Service's plans to expand into television, first mooted in the mid-1980s, were delayed by the government's refusal to fund it through a Foreign Office grant as with existing radio broadcasts. The BBC sought £10 million from J. Henry Schroder Wagg, the merchant bank, but decided instead to use existing revenue from BBC TV Europe, totalling £6 million, to fund its launch.

"There will be no licence fee or taxpayers' money involved," said Chris Irwin, currently World Service controller of resources and administration who becomes chief executive of BBC TV International.

John Tusa, managing director of the World Service, said: "The programme will combine the editorial priorities and global news agenda established by BBC World Service radio news with the skills of BBC Television news and current affairs. The crisis in the Gulf shows more clearly than ever the urgent need for World Service Television News."

The service plans eventually to increase the length of its television broadcasts.

Trade tops agenda at Costa Rica summit

Puntarenas — Central American leaders began their summit meeting in Costa Rica yesterday, ignoring the guerrilla wars in El Salvador and Guatemala, and increasing social unrest in Nicaragua and Panama, all concentrating instead on economic matters and the environment (Tony Avirgin writes).

Diplomats said that, instead of dealing with "political" issues, the presidents will discuss progress in the economic integration of Central America. This will include steps towards creating a free trade zone encompassing Central America, Mexico and the United States, proposed President Bush.

President Calderón of Costa Rica invited international environmental experts, including Jacques Cousteau of France, to address the five-day session.

Taj Mahal ban

Delhi — The Taj Mahal was placed out of bounds to visitors after Hindu-Muslim riots spread to the town of Agra, where at least four died since Saturday in shabnam and police gunfire. Hindu-Muslim violence has been spreading since the shooting of a Hindu in a mosque six days ago. (Reuters)

24 shot dead

Bogotá — Gunmen shot dead at least 24 people in their incidents and guerrillas destroyed an airliner in Colombia. Ten masked men burst into a discotheque in Medellín, killing 12 teenagers. Other gunmen killed seven in a police station in Bogotá, Belgium, and five more died in a bar in Bogotá. (Reuters)

Drug execution

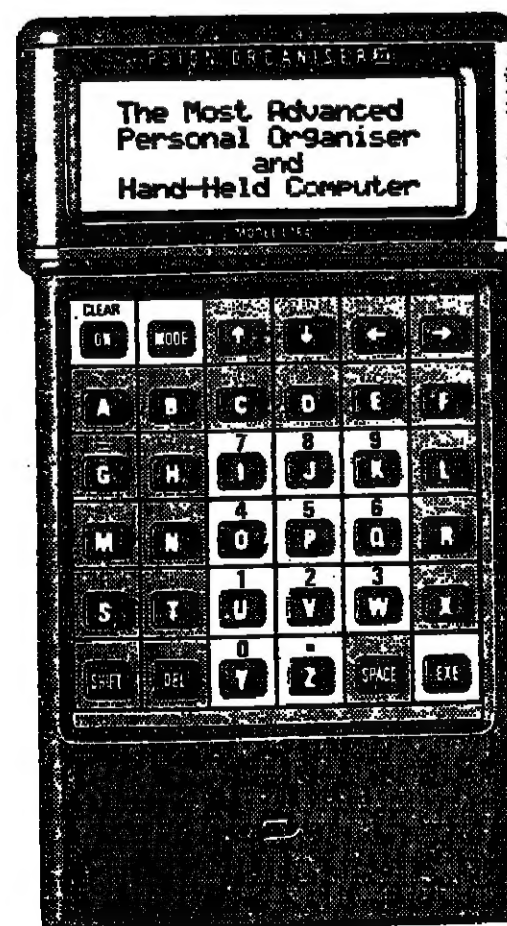
Peking — Four Chinese drug traffickers have been executed in Canton, which is becoming a key outlet for heroin and by gird from Burma through a southern China to the West. The city's Yangcheng Evening News said. Six trafficking including two Hong Kong citizens, were executed in Canton a week earlier. (Reuters)

Snakes alive

Hong Kong — The government here is planning to ban the sale of snakes and lizards that would banish from dinner table delicacies, a popular winter delicacy. The king of the snake, the cobra, and the cobra, the cobra, are to be protected in accordance with the UN-backed Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species. (Reuters)

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Thai leader steers by the stars

From NEIL KELLY IN BANGKOK

GENERAL Chatichai Choonhavan's astrology had a decisive influence on the formation of Thailand's new government which was sworn in yesterday by King Bhumibol.

The astrologer, whose identity is secret, told the prime minister that it was vital for his new government to be announced last Friday. He complied, but the hasty procedure led to the exclusion of a major party from the new coalition.

Kukrit Pramoj, a former prime minister and leader of the Social Action Party, said that the prime minister's aides had insisted that all names for appointment to the new cabinet must be submitted by Friday, although the party which was the second largest in the outgoing coalition had arranged to discuss names the following day.

"When we asked, why the hurry," said Mr Kukrit, "they said they had to stick to the astrologer's advice. Before we could do anything, the new cabinet

"If the government follows such rules, then it can mean disaster for the country. What would happen if an invading army was closing in and we could not find an auspicious time to begin defending ourselves. It is frightening that a person at the country's helm believes in using an auspicious time to do things."

General Chatichai is known to consult astrologers before making important decisions. Now pressure from generals and public uproar over accusations of corruption have forced a government reconstruction. What has emerged is a five-party coalition with a majority of 97 in parliament, 38 fewer than the previous government.

Two ministers suspected of corruption have been removed and a third made finance minister. He is Banham Sipha-Acha, who is seen by bankers and other businessmen as neither competent nor respectable enough for the key post. Businessmen say the government changes will reduce the confidence of investors. Big industrial and infrastructure projects approved by former ministers may now be

rejected by the newcomers. Some of the biggest communications and transport schemes in the world are at risk, including a new national telephone network involving British Telecom.

The appointment of Dr Arthit Uthairat as foreign minister was also seen as political stargazing. A scholar and businessman, he was once chief of the Bangkok waterworks, but otherwise is unknown in Thailand. His party said they were dubious about the appointment, as they did not feel competent to handle foreign affairs.

Earlier this year, leaders of the Democrat Party blamed their internal quarrels and other problems on a beautiful old tree outside their party headquarters. The tree, planted many decades ago by one of the party's founders, had been weakened, party leaders said, by internal decay. Despite public protests the tree was cut down. "Now we can show our unity and regain our old strength," said a party spokesman. But last week the Democrats were forced out of the government because some of its leaders were suspected of corruption.

The Rome summit

Brisk start as Twelve prepare to update EC's founding treaty

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN BRUSSELS

FOREIGN and finance ministers of the European Community will meet in January for the first time to discuss the two-year-old negotiations, following their brisk and business-like opening at the Rome summit on Saturday.

Experts appointed by each member country will immediately set to work today to clarify the agenda and begin drafting in the various languages the various suggestions each country wants to see incorporated in the revised Treaty of Rome. In keeping with the fast pace laid down at the summit, the experts will meet once a week, with monthly ministerial reviews to look at progress on the political and economic and monetary union.

They hope to finish both in just six months, with a further three to draw up the texts of

the treaties, leaving about 14 months for ratification by national parliaments. The community's new constitution would come into force at the beginning of 1993.

European leaders gave a detailed mandate to their negotiators to look at all the issues suggested so far in preparatory work on political union. These include a common foreign, security and defence policy, more majority voting, extending EC jurisdiction and drawing up a charter for European citizenship.

The leaders emphasised in the communiqué that such a mandate was not an attempt to pre-empt the outcome of the conference and the European Commission or any member state could raise other issues at any time.

To strengthen democratic accountability, the summit leaders asked the conference to consider

involving the European Parliament in the appointment of the commission president, increasing its powers to monitor the EC budget and extending its role in the co-operation procedure under the Single European Act. The IGC would also look at a possible role for parliament in initiating legislation. The communiqué said national parliaments must be involved more in EC affairs, and some countries want regional parliaments to have a greater say.

On a common foreign and security policy, the IGC was asked to draw up a framework that would leave the council as the main decision-making centre, but would give the Brussels commission a greater role, though not a sole right of initiative. The Twelve would have to act unanimously in laying down general guidelines on foreign policy, the communiqué said, allowing also, in a clause designed to satisfy hesitant countries such as Ireland, "non-participation or abstention in the voting as a means of not preventing unanimity". Once agreed, policies could be executed by majority vote.

On defence, the summit was careful, saying an EC role would have to be "without prejudice to member states' existing obligations in this area, bearing in mind the importance of maintaining and strengthening the ties within the Atlantic alliance and without prejudice to the traditional positions of other member states". This took in both Irish neutrality and Britain's strongly pro-Nato stance.

The Twelve agreed the thrust of a Spanish proposal for common EC citizenship, which included the right to vote in local and European parliamentary elections in other countries, freedom to settle anywhere in the EC even without a job, and joint protection of EC citizens overseas.

On strengthening EC competence, the communiqué suggested a range of new areas where Brussels would have power, including the social dimension, the environment, health, research, energy, completing a trans-European transport network, and culture and education. It also wanted inter-governmental co-operation on drugs, immigration, asylum and crime to be brought into the Treaty of Rome.

The Twelve suggested the role of the European Council - the summit meetings of the 12 leaders - should be strengthened in guiding the EC's development. There could be more majority voting in the council of ministers, and the commission should have its powers strengthened.

All EC leaders welcomed the communiqué. Giulio Andreotti, the Italian summit host, said the results were better than could have been foreseen "not only a couple of months ago but even a couple of days ago".

Ronald Butt, page 10
Delors plans, page 10
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President-elect's prayer: Lech Walesa attending an outdoor Mass for shipyard workers at Gdansk to commemorate the 1970 killings when dozens of rioting Poles were shot dead by security forces. He called on his countrymen to take part in the enormous work which remains to pull Poland out of its economic

shambles. Mr Walesa, due to be sworn in as president before Christmas, will nominate Jan Olszewski, the human rights lawyer, as his prime minister (Roger Boyes writes). Mr Olszewski, aged 60, who has defended dissidents since the 1960s, is part of the Centre Alliance, which fought for Mr

Walesa in the presidential campaign. He is regarded as far to the right of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, whose resignation was formally accepted by parliament on Friday. Mr Walesa, who is currently working from a seaside villa in Sopot until his inauguration, wanted to prevent any hiatus of government and, after

much speculation, decided to put forward Mr Olszewski's name. Following a week of horse-trading, the broad contours of the new administration's line-up are already clear. Professor Leszek Balcerowicz has been asked to continue as finance minister, though not as deputy prime minister.

Straight bat for Captain Major

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

USED to be said that if Margaret Thatcher did not exist, European Community would have to invent her as a flying force for the other 11 member states. Perhaps if Jacques Delors, the commission president, did not exist, John Major would have had to invent him. Without Mr Delors and his set to provoke a political crisis in British counter-proposals on economic and monetary union, it was so much sweetness and light around the new boy at the EC unit in Rome that Mr Major found himself confronted by the Commons tomorrow by the ranks of Tory-Euro sceptics who said he had sold the country. Now they will be reassured.

Truth be told, nothing, and remains opposed to an old single currency, to the union of majority voting in the Council, to increased powers for the European parliament, and to elements of social charter which risked to the numbers of unemployed across the EC. And while Mr Major may have his name to the summit unimpaired, giving greater importance to the "social dimension", he has signed up to nothing more. There was in the end no use of political union. The inter-governmental conference on subject has not had its discussions dictated before it is work.

in the attitude of the 11 members to British participation in the plan has been transformed. He met his first test on the national scene. Those who jostled him in Rome paid tribute to his lack of hesitancy and moral ease of manner. British leaders about the resolve of minority partners on the Gulf, and the shape of the plan to aid

the Soviet Union, and about the likelihood of unwinding sanctions against South Africa to encourage President de Klerk's reform programme were all resolved. The voluntary ban on new EC investment in South Africa has gone.

The communiqué annexed to the Gulf specifically backed the United Nations Security Council resolution 678 authorising the use of force if there is no Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait by January 15. And the package of food and other aid for the Soviet Union



Delors: threat to provoke a political crisis

was accompanied by warnings of the need not to harm domestic producers by agricultural dumping.

Mr Major stated his wish to play a central role in shaping the new Europe, emphasising that Europe was a fact of life to those of his age group and below. Thus, without a word directly denying Mrs Thatcher, he clearly dissociated himself from the years of handbag swinging. But he made it plain that Britain was not for hijacking and that vetoes were there to be used.

Gorbachev braced for fight to impose his will on parliament

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

WHEN the full Soviet parliament convenes today in Moscow, President Gorbachev will begin a ten-day struggle to regain the initiative as Soviet leader and subject an increasingly unruly country to his will. At least one republic, Lithuania, is boycotting the proceedings altogether, while others are expected to use the meeting to set their conditions for remaining in the union.

Preparations for the parliament, the fourth union Congress of People's Deputies, have been accompanied by a crescendo of voices calling for drastic action to restore order. There is speculation that further appeals will be orchestrated through the congress and then used to sanction the declaration of a national emergency. This could entail direct presidential rule throughout the country, with or without the deployment of interior ministry and KGB personnel to enforce it.

The three Baltic republics, which have stated their intention

of seceding from the Soviet Union, have come under particular pressure in the approach to the congress. Last week saw a concerted campaign in the official media to blacken their image in the eyes of the Soviet public, spearheaded by Pravda and Tass.

The party paper printed letters from residents in Latvia claiming discrimination and even violence against ethnic Russians, the Soviet military, and communists. There were also barely disguised allegations of a fascist revival, "a distasteful hint of brown" as Mr Gorbachev expressed it in two recent speeches. Last Tuesday Vladimir Kryuchkov, the head of the KGB, whipped up passions further by warning, in terms reminiscent of an earlier age, of concerted attempts to remove the Communist Party from power and of plots by foreign agents.

The congress finds democratic and reformist forces in no condition to oppose the calls for tougher central leadership and the

enforcement of discipline. In its heyday nine months ago, the Democratic Bloc forced the exclusion from the constitution of the "leading role of the Communist party", then proceeded to gain control of several large cities in local and republic elections.

Since then, however, the bloc's fortunes have declined. It has splintered into two dozen or more separate groups, none of which is large enough to encompass the others. The death of Andrei Sakharov a year ago was a grievous loss to the bloc. Without a leader of his moral authority, who never compromised, the people in contention to unite the movement have been reduced to hurling recriminations at each other for the sins of the past.

The economic disorder, the perceived increase in crime, and the bloc's weakness have been successfully used by groups hostile to reform to back their demands for firm leadership. The Soyuz, or Union, group, which last year was a minority alliance of conservative-minded deputies, is now a force to be reckoned with, representing both the law-and-order lobby and ethnic Russians in non-Russian republics who fear for their lives if the Soviet Union breaks up. Soyuz has been widely associated with calls for a state of emergency and army intervention, but on Saturday it formally expressed support for Mr Gorbachev's leadership and urged the congress agenda to be approved today without changes.

The congress programme includes two highly contentious topics: the restructuring of the central leadership to subordinate the government directly to the president, and the principles of the draft of a new union treaty to modify relations between the centre and the republics. Two other measures are the introduction of a post of vice-president and a new clause in the constitution to permit referendums. There is more to these proposals than meets the eye.

Letters, page 11

Apparatchiks defend their party privileges

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

A REPORT by the Soviet Communist Party has defended the degree of privilege enjoyed by its senior officials and even called for some improvements in their position. Opposition groups, as well as many voters, are likely to be infuriated by the document.

The report presented last week to the party's Central Committee asserts that the bitterly resented perks of apparatchiks have been scaled down greatly in recent years and were in any case exaggerated by anti-communist politicians.

The document, commissioned by the party congress in July and published in Pravda yesterday, finds that only a small minority of the Communist Party's 17 million members enjoy any benefits at all.

It adds that "quite a few party leaders have divested themselves of privileges which can only be described as abusive".

Characteristic of the report's contented style is the statement that regional party organisations do not generally control dachas or country houses; this is followed by the qualification that the Communist Party organisations of Moscow, Leningrad, Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan are exceptions to this otherwise iron rule. Provision of dachas for workers at party headquarters in Moscow is explained by the fact that up to now, apparatchiks had "quite unjustifiably" been barred from acquiring their personal dachas or private plots outright.

Rioting spreads in Albania

By RICHARD BASSETT AND DESSA TREVISAN

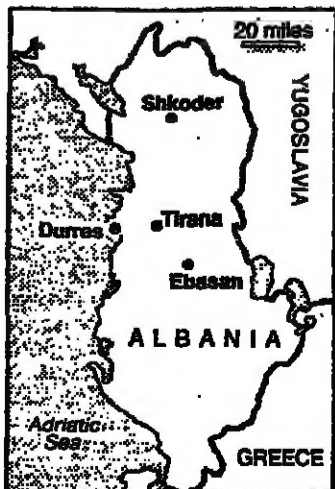
UNREST continued in Albania at the weekend as President Alia tried in vain to rally the nation. He mobilised the media and harnessed the newly-formed opposition party, the Democratic party, but violence flared in several cities in spite of his desperate appeal for calm.

In the city of Shkoder, demonstrators used dynamite to topple a giant statue of Enver Hoxha, the founder of communist Albania. At the steel works in Ebesan, workers fought pitched battles with police and the army. The battles lasted more than eight hours, forcing the army to deploy the country's entire force of 16 armoured vehicles.

Witnesses spoke of many injuries and an official communiqué noted that more than a dozen soldiers had been injured.

At the Adriatic port of Dures, buses were burnt and shops looted as several thousand teenage demonstrators took to the streets. More than 50 young people were arrested there, according to the Albanian News Agency.

The violence, which continues in spite of calls for calm by President Alia, opposition party leaders and even the recently freed Roman Catholic Bishop of Shkoder, Simon Xhubani, underlines



the rift between intellectuals and the rest of the population. President Alia, who yesterday received telegrams pledging the support of the army, continues to use old communist jargon. Addressing a rally of party veterans and farmers at Pesh yesterday, Mr Alia said: "The demonstrators and the protesters have nothing in common with the Albanian people. We must unite to defend everything that has been achieved in Albania over the last decades of blood and sweat."

His words are echoed by opposition leaders who have also

condemned the violence and appealed for calm. Not surprisingly, more and more Albanians question whether real change can take place while Mr Alia remains at the helm. Although he is depicted by many intellectuals as "the Balkan Gorbachev", Mr Alia is a weak man who has never been able to throw off the influence of hardline Communist party veterans.

Albania's exiled King Leka I yesterday said he was prepared to return to his country if the people desired. The exiled monarch, who last set foot in his country as a child in 1939, said by telephone from Johannesburg that he was following closely the events in Albania.

"The new parties have been created astonishingly quickly. There is a great danger of their being manipulated by the communists. I am also sceptical of the possibility of genuinely free elections in February. We must not forget the 43,000 political prisoners languishing in Albania's jails," he said.

The exiled monarch noted that President Alia's tentative reforms, including a reshuffle of the politburo, had done little to dent the enormous power of Hoxha's hardline, stalinist widow, Nexhmije.

Leading article, page 11

Romania pressure on Iliescu growing

Timisoara - Opposition to the Romanian government gathered pace at the weekend as leading politicians called for its resignation and for its replacement with a government of national unity (Tim Judah writes).

Radu Campeanu, the leader of the National Liberal Party, said that he had asked President Iliescu for the formation of a new government pending new elections and that the president was considering his request. Mr Campeanu was speaking at a press conference in Bucharest called by the leaders of six opposition parties who announced that they had formed a new grouping called the National Convention for the Restoration of Democracy.

The Civic Alliance, an important opposition umbrella group, also announced that it was calling for the resignation of the government and that it wanted a referendum on whether Romania should be a presidential or parliamentary republic or a constitutional monarchy.

In the western city of Timisoara, birthplace of the Romanian revolution, demonstrators took to the streets chanting: "Iliescu is a liar - we want your skin to make a coat." Ten thousand demonstrators gathered in Opera Square and listened to speeches virtually calling for a second revolution.

Cruise critics

Paris - Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, the son of President Mitterrand, who serves as his father's chief adviser on African affairs at the Elysée Palace, yesterday faced public criticism for taking a luxury cruise holiday while hundreds of French expatriates were trying to escape the civil war in Chad. The news magazine *Le Point* claimed that he "did not hesitate to embark on a gastronomic and musical cruise" while the regime of Hissène Habré swung in the balance and numerous French were held up in Chad.

Greek manhunt

Athens - Police launched a hunt for at least 60 prisoners who remained at large after 81 escaped from the main maximum security prison in Greece, having overpowered guards in the country's biggest jailbreak. Hours later, the government ordered an inquiry into the breakout, the second at Korydallos prison, near Piraeus, in little more than a month.

Basque tree bomb

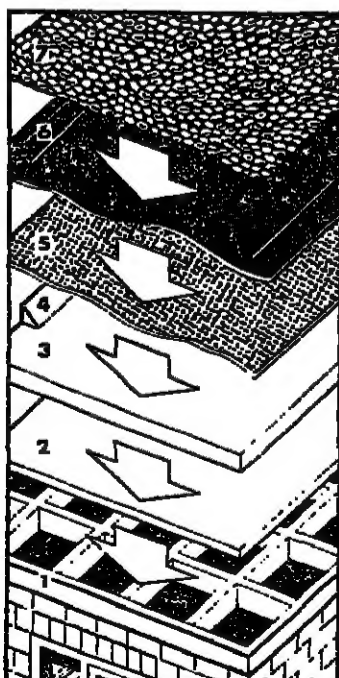
Bilbao - A bomb hidden inside a Christmas tree injured six people near a police station outside Bilbao. Eta separatists have stepped up their violent campaign for Basque independence, killing eight people, seven of them policemen, in the past week. A letter bomb disguised as a Christmas card sent to a prison holding several Eta members in Ceuta was detonated safely. (Reuters)

Plots unearthed

Rome - Italian police, fighting organized crime, bugged the graves of fallen godfathers and gleaned conversations that led to 19 arrests, including "Don" Raffaele Ascione, leader of one of Naples' feared Camorra families. Working at night, the carabinieri wired the Herculaneum cemetery plots of two key crime families, learning from mourning relatives details of how two clan leaders were killed and uncovering plans for their revenge.

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Reluctant Europeans in search of a new defence framework



King: Prague's force in Gulf outdoes most European states

NATO foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels today to discuss the future of the alliance and European security, will survey a scene radically altered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. With the Cold War at an end, European countries had already begun to plan a new security framework, under which America would still play an important role but Europe would shoulder more of the burden.

But Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, in a speech in Berlin last Monday, envisaged an expanded role for the nine-nation Western European Union, including a rapid reaction force which could intervene in conflicts outside Europe. With the majority of WEU members showing a distinct reluctance to join battle with a dictator whose actions threaten not just the security of the Middle

East but also the economies of Europe, such a vision seems over-optimistic. If they are not prepared to put themselves in the front line against President Saddam Hussein, what guarantees of greater commitment can there be in a future conflict?

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, America's European allies, with the exception of Britain and France, have found a variety of excuses for limiting their military contribution towards the allied coalition against President Saddam. A remark by Tom King,

the defence secretary, in Paris earlier this week, epitomised the sense of frustration over the European response to the Gulf confrontation. Even Czechoslovakia, he said, not yet a member of Nato, had sent nearly 200 chemical warfare troops.

If war breaks out — and it is still a strong possibility, in spite of the raised hopes of a peaceful settlement — only three members of Nato (the US, Britain and France) will be fighting with troops, tanks and artillery. Two others, Italy and Canada, could be involved in

air warfare. Italy has sent eight Tornados, and Canada has deployed 18 CF18s.

For the rest, the principal contribution has been on the naval side. While the sending of warships has been a crucial element in the build-up of forces, the message from the majority of European countries was clear: Deploying ships to the Gulf to form a naval blockade of Iraq was one thing, sending ground troops to fight a war was another. Even the naval offerings were not over-generous in some cases. Greece, with a navy of 12 destroyers and seven frigates, sent one frigate to the Gulf of Aden. For four months, the Americans have appealed to their alliance partners in Europe for more military help. Last week Richard Cheney, the American defence secretary, said that he

would like countries to send ground troops in integrated units, capable of functioning with their own logistical supply lines. No one has yet come forward.

The cynical would say that Britain decided to send an armoured brigade, followed by a second, because of the special relationship with the US and the desire on Margaret Thatcher's part to demonstrate that she was prepared to do to President Saddam what she did to President Galtieri of Argentina in 1982.

The French, the cynical would suggest, joined in because they, too, would not want to be left out. If there was to be a peace table, with a defeated Iraq on the agenda, France wanted a seat. While there may be an element of truth here, the fact is that Britain and France have sent troops, tanks

and artillery, as well as fighter aircraft and warships. If there is a war, British and French servicemen will die, alongside their American allies, to rid Kuwait of Iraqi forces.

One reason for the present reluctance of other European countries is the involvement of American forces in Saudi Arabia. Nato leaders have always emphasised the importance of retaining the Atlantic connection in any discussions on the future of the alliance, yet when the United States intervenes in out-of-area regional conflicts, or decides to "do something" about leaders who pose a particular threat to Western society — Colonel Gaddafi in 1986 — most European allies do not want to be involved.

Letters, page 11

Setback to peace hopes as Baghdad backs off US talks

From MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND JUAN CARLOS GUMUCIO

PROSPECTS for a diplomatic solution to the Gulf deadlock received two big setbacks at the weekend when Iraq called off discussions with Washington and President Chadli Benjedid of Algeria abandoned hopes of an Arab solution to avert war.

Although the White House said that dialogue with Baghdad was still possible, the chances of direct talks to avert war before the January 15 deadline diminished substantially when Baghdad cancelled today's visit to Washington by its foreign minister, Tariq Aziz.

In a similarly unexpected move, Algeria yesterday abandoned its quest for an exclusively "Arab solution" to the Gulf conflict and indirectly endorsed the US-led military

build-up to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. A statement issued in Damascus after talks between President Chadli and his Syrian counterpart, President Assad, said that "the possibilities for achieving a solution in the Gulf separate from an international settlement have faded" and urged Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait to allow the return of the ruling al-Sabah family and heed the calls "of all sincere Arabs".

The brief statement left no doubts that Algeria has firmly sided with Syria, Baghdad's arch-rival, which has pledged 15,000 soldiers and 300 tanks to the anti-Iraq force centred in Saudi Arabia. "It has become impossible, after the passage of time and the passing of international

resolutions, to find a solution except within the framework of an international settlement," it said. Iraq should "take the initiative" and pull out of Kuwait and "avoid anticipated big tragedies to the region and Iraq".

In spite of Iraq's increased isolation and repeated refusal to bow to international pressure, the US administration made it clear that it still believes President Saddam Hussein might yet drop his refusal to meet James Baker, the US Secretary of State, in Baghdad before January 15. Underlying the administration's continued optimism is its belief that Iraq really wants the talks and is indulging in brinkmanship to force Washington's hand. The later Mr Baker visits Baghdad, the greater the likelihood that the Americans will have to postpone the January 15 deadline, eroding its credibility, and the more time for anti-war sentiment to grow in the United States.

George Mitchell, the Senate Democratic leader, said in Cairo yesterday: "We believe that this missed opportunity is a serious miscalculation by President Saddam Hussein."

In a Washington Post interview William Webster, the CIA director, said US intelligence experts believed President Saddam might order a partial pull-out or some other move that fall short of the UN demand for a complete withdrawal by January 15 in order to buy time. But he would not fully comply with the UN resolution until convinced he was "in peril of imminent military attack".

● MOSCOW: Soviet diplomatic initiative on the Gulf has apparently come to nothing after a planned meeting between the foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, and the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Yasser Arafat, failed to materialise (Mary Dejevsky writes).

The meeting was to have taken place in Turkey during Mr Shevardnadze's visit to Ankara at the end of last week, but the Soviet foreign ministry spokesman, Vitali Churkin, said a combination of an airline strike in Athens and uncertainty about Mr Arafat's schedule made it impossible.



Arens: claims deportation is an effective deterrent



President Chadli siding firmly with Syria

America condemns Israel expulsions

From PAUL ADAMS IN JERUSALEM AND MARTIN FLETCHER

MOSHE Arens, the Israeli defence minister, yesterday told Palestinians to expect further deportations, after Saturday's decision to expel four alleged members of the outlawed Islamic fundamentalist organisation, Hamas.

The move to resume deportation of Palestinian activists from the occupied territories was immediately condemned by the Bush administration, which is sensitive to any Israeli action that could alienate Washington's Arab allies in the Gulf conflict by diverting attention to the Arab-Israeli confrontation.

"The US deplores this decision," said a state department spokesman. "We've consistently... held that such deportations are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention as it pertains to the treatment of inhabitants of occupied territories."

Only last week, President Bush had a meeting with Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, at the White House at which they discussed the Gulf conflict at length and on the need for Israel to continue keeping a low profile.

The deportation decision also undermines current US attempts to dilute a proposed United Nations resolution which suggests an international Middle East peace conference be convened to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, something Israel rejects.

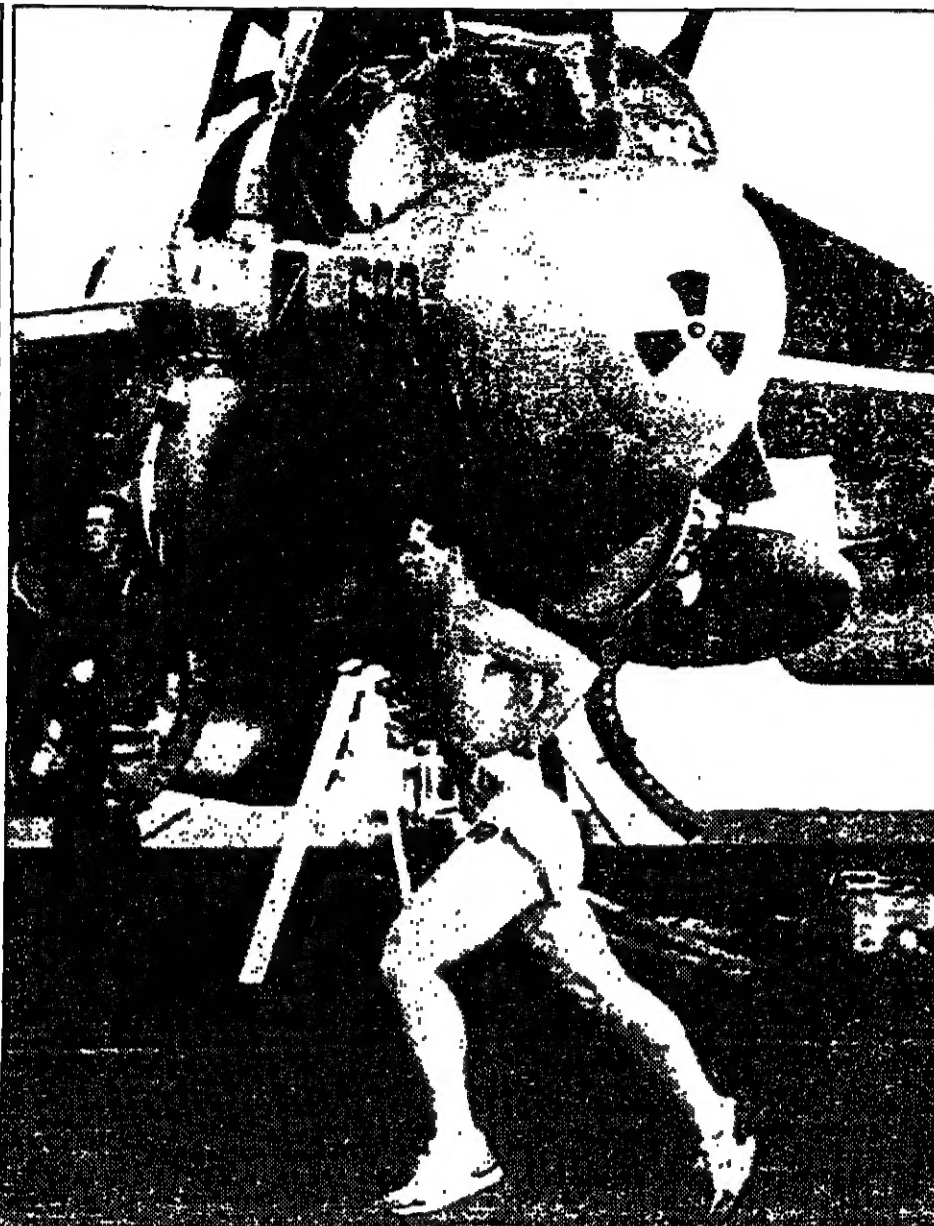
In the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli authorities arrested at least 600 suspected weekend militants over the weekend, Hamas vowed to continue a holy war against Israel. As many as 400,000 Palestinians were under curfew as the army continued its search for those responsible for Friday's murder of three Israelis in Jaffa. The cabinet discussed the

killings at its weekly meeting, and reports suggested that a majority of its members advocate the imposition of the death penalty for serious acts of terrorism.

"We must take all the measures we deem effective to deal with the phenomenon (an increase in religious and nationalist fanaticism)," Mr Arens told Israel radio. "I have no doubt that deportations are an effective deterrent."

The last deportations took place in September 1989. Earlier that year, Yitzhak Rabin, then the defence minister, declared that the policy had "been found to be ineffective in the battle against the intifada". Other studies have found a correlation between deportations and an increase in the level of violence.

Mr Arens is reported to have asked for the deportation of 14 Palestinians, but Mr Shamir gave permission for only four. Mr Shamir, who heard US concerns about deportations last week, told the cabinet that it was important to take international opinion into account.



Runway: Kolin Jan, a US Navy pilot commander, jogging past an EA 6B bomber on the deck of the aircraft carrier, the USS J. F. Kennedy, in the Red Sea. US Navy jets will strike targets in western Iraq if war breaks out. Rear-Admiral Riley Miron, commander of the Red Sea task force, said

(Reuters reports). Jets in the Gulf would back up any invasion by allied ground troops against the Iraqi army in Kuwait. "The number one mission is to go in and strike those targets we've called on to strike, and both the Red Sea side and the Gulf side are prepared to do that," he said.

Iraq 'on way to A-bomb'

By MICHAEL EVANS

IRAQ may have succeeded in building a special uranium enrichment factory, raising fears that President Saddam Hussein could have a nuclear capability within a year, according to a newspaper report yesterday.

American and British intelligence experts are convinced that Iraq is still some way from building a "deliverable" nuclear bomb, in spite of Baghdad's intensive efforts to acquire the technology over the last few years.

However, according to *The Sunday Times*, Iraq managed to build a prototype gas centrifuge plant, vital for turning low-grade uranium into bomb-grade uranium, with the unwitting help of a scientist from West Germany.

The equipment for the laboratory plant had been supplied from France, Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Until now, expert opinion was that Iraq would be incapable of completing an atomic bomb programme until it had built a gas centrifuge facility. There has been no official evidence of such a facility existing in Iraq.



'Little town' becomes ghost town

From RICHARD OWEN IN BETHLEHEM, OCCUPIED WEST BANK

HE stared out from all Israeli newspaper front pages this week: a young man in uniform, hand on hip, an Uzi sub-machine-gun slung over his shoulder, a faintly quizzical stare beneath his crew cut.

Guy Friedman was 19, a junior member of an Israeli foot patrol in Bethlehem, when a roadside bomb ended his life. He had only just completed his basic training, and was part of reinforcements sent to the occupied territories to control disturbances as the Palestinian intifada begins its fourth year.

The bomb, and the unprecedented four-day curfew which followed, have soured an already tense atmosphere in Bethlehem, which until the uprising made its livelihood from the thousands of tourists

and pilgrims who flocked to the birthplace of Christ, especially in the weeks immediately before Christmas. Now Bethlehem is a ghost town. Once considered a centre of political moderation because of its middle-class Christian Arab population, it is now one of the hotspots of the Palestinian revolt.

Police commanders at their Manger Square headquarters, surrounded by a high wire-mesh fence against stones and petrol bombs, are bracing themselves for further violence in case the underground leadership of the intifada takes advantage of Bethlehem's annual appearance in the spotlight.

At his office overlooking the square and the fourth-century Church of the Nativity, Elias

Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem, deplored the killing of Arabs and Jews. "What is truly depressing is the absence of dialogue."

The nearby town of Beit Sahour (Shepherds' Fields), on the hillside where the news of Christ's birth was announced by the angels, has maintained a tradition of Arab-Jewish dialogue despite the intifada, with left-wing Israelis from the peace movement braving the stones and burning tyres to meet moderate Palestinians in their homes. But this too is under threat, as both Bethlehem and Beit Sahour increasingly fall under the influence of the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Last year's tax rebellion, in which middle-class residents

of Beit Sahour refused to pay taxes to the occupying forces, has also radicalised the community. The local Muslim minority (the Bethlehem area is one of the few Christian-dominated Arab parts of the West Bank) supports Hamas, the outlawed Islamic fundamentalist group.

"Let 1991 be the year of destroying the enemy," says one of the many PFLP slogans scrawled on the walls of Beit Sahour. There is not much room for dialogue and coexistence there. Instead, the talk is of the need to inflict casualties on Israelis so that Israel will come to regard its occupation of the West Bank as a liability and withdraw.

"We have the right to use all means of struggle," one PFLP activist said.

Major shows his metal

Ronald Butt

When a British political party needs both a new leader and significant shifts of policy it often chooses the person who seems most loyal to the old order but who then in practice seeks out changing it. So, after the collapse of the Suez adventure, the Tories turned to Harold Macmillan, ostensibly the candidate of the traditionalists and the centre-right, in preference to the "liberal" (or "wet") Rab Butler. It was as though the party had tacitly decided to ignore Macmillan's long-standing "middle way" social policies and his flirtation with a brand of economics that many Tories thought not far short of socialism. Macmillan as prime minister not only went into reverse on Suez and "colonialism" but practised the kind of economic management against which Mrs Thatcher's government was later to revolt.

Likewise, Harold Wilson, the candidate most closely associated with Labour's troublesome "left", was elected leader in 1963 in preference to George Brown, the natural heir to Hugh Gaitskell. Wilson had known better than to offend against Labour's "ark of the covenant", as he liked to call it, by which he meant that he would not be so silly as to talk about repealing the commitment to public ownership or to fight the party conference over its support for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, he became a traditionalist prime minister, adhering to NATO and nuclear weapons, fighting (though unsuccessfully) to "save" the parity of the pound and even trying to defeat the unions over pay.

As for Neil Kinnock, once the darling of the Tribune Group, he has done more than any other Labour leader to free Labour from its socialist roots and to make it electable, however little conviction he personally carries as a potential prime minister.

Now we have John Major who, though elected Tory leader by the will of the Thatcherites as a means of stopping Michael Heseltine, immediately appointed Mr Heseltine to deal with (and if necessary to get rid of) the poll tax, who talks in terms of a more compassionate type of Conservatism (which he has, for instance, rightly demonstrated by finding compensation for AIDS-infected haemophiliacs) and shows every sign of wanting to provide more money for the public services.

Above all, he has already replaced Mrs Thatcher's blank hostility to European monetary union by a willingness to talk more affably about it, while maintaining the same essential objections to the damage the Delors plan would do to national sovereignty and parliamentary accountability. By dealing cordially with Chancellor Kohl, he has so succeeded in defusing the tension as to annoy M Delors into threatening that "we" will "pro-

voke a second political crisis" if necessary. Who "we" are is less than clear - the Commission or the Council of Ministers? The reality is that if Mr Major can persuade his fellow heads of government that their real needs are similar to Britain's, and can find an agreed way forward that is different from the Delors approach, there is nothing that M Delors or any other commissioner can do about it.

Mr Major's great asset is his willingness to get on with the other heads of government (his natural allies in dealing with the Commission), instead of affronting them as, for example, Mrs Thatcher offended Herr Kohl over the approach to German unity.

In this pragmatic and positive approach to Europe, Mr Major has the support of a broad spectrum of political opinion in all British parties. His real difficulty is in his wish to shift the balance of Tory policy back towards the middle way in social matters, finding more money that would shoot hospital waiting lists, better schools and the like. The changes he wants to make to Thatcherism are clear enough. The difficulty is where the money is to come from as the economic recession deepens, as it will, in the coming months.

More money through higher taxation is politically out of the question. So is inflationary borrowing. The government cannot look to a buoyant revenue. If Mr Major will risk offending vested interests, a little money could be found by cutting out departmental support grants to non-official bodies over which Parliament has no control. But the truth is that, given his anti-inflationary priority, Mr Major is in a trap. He can offer a few minor palliatives but as yet nothing more. The fact that Labour (inadequate as it is still felt to be) is again creeping up on the Tories in the opinion polls is a portent.

That is why talk about a honeymoon dash for an early election is misplaced. Voters would scent a deceit. But the more favoured time, next October, would be even more risky, since Mr Major's personal honeymoon with the voters will by then be over and the recession will probably be at its deepest. Though interest rates will be down there will not have been time for the recovery to be felt. Nor will there have been the opportunity for a pre-election expansionary budget or for the money needed to be made available for the public sector.

Logic therefore points firmly towards an election at the latest possible moment for the ending of this parliament - the summer of 1992. To wait is a hard decision to take, but Mr Major's personal and political record suggest that he has the nerve to take it. He should do so if he wishes to achieve the proper mixture of continuity and change that is his purpose.

...and moreover

MATTHEW PARRIS

Rubbing shoulders with us in London, yet in a world of their own, are tens of thousands of tourists. You hear their accents in coffee bars and smile as they try to tip bus conductresses. Their lives hardly engage with ours.

The younger and poorer ones study guide books with titles like "London on \$15 a Day". This type of tourist gets value for money. The older and richer type you can observe enjoying a top quality excursion, shepherded from the dress circle at Covent Garden to the better tables at the Savoy by discreet couriers. This type gets value for money too; for, though they pay for it, they get the best. I expect there are guide books written for them, as well.

But nobody has written a guide to the commonest tourist experience of all in London: paying through the nose for complete tat. Where can you find the tackiest rubbish at the highest prices? For extortionate hotels, greasy cabbies, costly trash and boutique beer at rip-off prices, London is paradise. Connoisseurs of the bad deal deserve their own special guide to the very worst.

After two weeks' research, assisted by Dominic McLoughlin (to whom, thanks) I can offer an advanced peek from our *Silliest Prices* guide to London. It takes the form of a two-day excursion (flights included) from Zurich. The package has been designed for a more Swiss Family Robinson: Mr and Mrs Toblerone and their two sons, Fritz, 15, and Ernest, 12.

British Airways' return fare from Zurich to Heathrow (economy class) is £411 return. Honestly. Yes, I know you can have two weeks in Kenya or the Caribbean, hotel included, for less: but the Toblerones want to visit London. All four will pay the full adult fare.

At Heathrow they will stop in Grandma Lee's for refreshments. Mr and Mrs T will enjoy a cappuccino coffee (£1.20) each, sharing a small mineral water (£1.25), and allowing Fritz to have an orange juice at the same price, and Ernest a Coke. A salmon sandwich (£2.70) catches Mr T's eye at the "standing" bar. The others each

have one, cheaper sandwich. Having snacked at a total cost of £13.35, it is time now to look around for souvenirs.

In Teddies at Heathrow, they sell teddies. An "Ava brand" teddy, rather more than a foot high, reduced from £79.99 to £49.99 is a bargain too good to miss. There is nothing special about this teddy. Nor about the coffee mug with the bad transfer of a punk, at £2.75. A policeman's plastic helmet (at £4.50 the same price as a 100 per cent polyester baseball cap bearing the London Transport logo, made in Taiwan) is Ernest's choice. Fritz lashes out £15.99 for an "Ivory" Tower Bridge, four inches by three, at the Heathrow W H Smith, though he may regret this when he spots the same item selling at a third of the price in the tourist shop opposite Big Ben.

Somewhere Mr Toblerone rebels. He orders his family to put back the teddy, mug and helmet, saving £57.24.

It's time to hit London. Computer Cab quotes £31 ("plus £1.50 booking fee") for the journey into town. With luck, then, they will arrive safely at Russell Square.

I am not going to tell you the name of the hotel they choose. It was the first one we examined and, for all I know, represents good value by comparison with the others. But until I can do better, I place the Toblerones at a large, characterless, modern establishment, lacking distinction of any kind. It is clean, adequate, but not luxurious, and has a bar in a rather unsuccessfully mock London club style. At this hotel, double rooms with bath are £107 per night each.

Let us take stock. The holiday (one night paid) has so far cost the Toblerones £1,919.84. That is about £1 more than the single person's "income support" (what used to be supplementary benefit) for a whole year.

Let us buy Fritz an ice-cream (one cone) in Parliament Square for 50p and, before we book four seats for the most smart-assed Sondheim musical in town, pause for a moment's shameful silence.

It is only 6pm, and the Toblerones have yet to dine.

Michael Binyon reports on the pique and frustration behind that 'political crisis' threat

What does Delors think he's doing?

The Rome EC summit was the first for years to end in harmony and goodwill. There was no dissenting British voice, no sovereignty tantrums, no denunciations of continentalists conspiring to impose a federal Europe. Mr Major was well pleased with his debut on the European stage, and Britain's partners were pleasantly surprised by him. Why then did Jacques Delors spoil the mood with such waspish rancour? Why did he threaten to wreck the reconciliation before it had even been sealed?

M Delors, president of the Commission, is a far-sighted analyst. He knew that much of the warm glow at Rome was atmospheric, the result of a determined effort by Britain and the other 11 to begin a fresh page in their relations. He saw that Britain's new tone did not herald completely new policies, and that the fundamental differences among the Twelve on both political and economic union can long be glossed over with good intentions. He remains suspicious of Britain, and said so.

Partly his outburst was one of frustration. For Mrs Thatcher's absence was like the ending of the cold war. All had looked forward to the day when ideological conflict would end. But when it did, other differences, long suppressed, came to the surface. As long as she was there, M Delors could rally the other 11 behind the cause of European integration. But as Eastern Europe has found, defeat the common enemy and the momentum is lost. Local nationalisms quickly grow.

As Mr Major insisted, there is no longer an automatic 11-1 majority in the community. On both monetary and political union, there is now a kaleidoscope of opinions. Each twist of events changes the alliances and configurations. And some of the new patterns are not to M Delors' liking.

For although he is the most effective leader the community has ever known, he has a self-righteous certainty bordering on arrogance. He often says he is only the servant of the 12 governments. But he takes very seriously the vision of the community's founding fathers, and what he sees as the Commission's role to protect this, and said so.

He insisted again in Rome that nothing should be done to close

the window on the federal Europe they envisaged. And some of the cross-winds blowing at the summit suggested to him that this window may be harder to keep open than he realised.

For the Franco-German alliance, the motor of the community which had pulled it along the federal path, now seems to be heading slightly off course. France wants European political integration to be an inter-governmental affair, with a strengthened European Council - the six-monthly summits of the 12 leaders - playing the leading role; it sees little need to give more power to supranational institutions such as the Commission. As often before, the French have persuaded the Germans to go along largely with their proposals which, with only a few modifications, Mr Major could also accept.

That would be a powerful trioka. Only Italy, the other big power, together with Spain, Greece, Belgium and Luxembourg would remain closely aligned to the Commission.

Divergences are also appearing on EMU, which M Delors correctly sees as a fundamental step to

difficult for Britain now to move closer to the Commission's ideas. M Delors, like everyone else, accepts that the results of the two intergovernmental conferences cannot be pre-empted. Mr Major's plan must be put on the table and discussed, as must all the varying proposals for deepening the community's political integration. Why, otherwise, hold the conferences? All 12 now accept that the Treaty of Rome will be amended and that considerable changes in the way the community functions are inevitable.

M Delors, in best French tradition, believes that issues are best clarified by argument. He frequently notes that nobody, five years ago, would have believed today's degree of EC integration possible. He says the debate in the two conferences over the community's future should illumine where it wants now to go.

But the kind of *ad hominem* argument he engaged in with Mrs Thatcher over the past three years has plainly taken a toll on his nerves. Perhaps his warning to Mr Major was merely a cry of despair at the thought of going through it all over again.

But M Delors' pique should not be over-estimated. His remark that he would be willing to provoke a "political crisis" over Britain's EMU proposals was in answer to a question, and not intended as quite the challenge to Mr Major that it looks in retrospect. Nevertheless, it is sure to lead to an angry argument within the Commission today, especially as several commissioners believe the remark will only rekindle the row with Britain they had hoped was laid to rest, making it more

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Lost cause, but still they hanker for the hangman

As MPs vote today on the restoration of capital punishment, Bernard Levin wonders how otherwise civilised men can support so barbaric a practice

Whence comes the extraordinary and apparently implacable desire among Members of Parliament (mostly Conservative) to have people strangled or, at the least, have their necks broken? There are one or two people I would love to strangle, and a few whose necks I would be happy to break, but it is all pretty metaphorical; given the chance, I dare say I would make a lordly gesture of forgiveness and go my way. Not these; necks are for stretching, they never tire of saying, and despite the countless disappointments they have had to face in their decades of fruitless yearning for a rope, a trap door and three rousing cheers, their loving dream is with them still.

I know some of them; indeed, one, before he became an MP, could be found shoulder to shoulder with me, as we filibustered away in the mad hope of trying to make the National Union of Journalists a body that could be taken seriously. (We did not succeed, of course, but that was hardly our fault; when I asked Hercules to help he said: "You must be joking, mate.") But what I am saying is that in those days he exhibited no such interest in necks and their breaking; what bug has so severely bitten a calm, logical and agreeable man that he lives in the hope, however far it has receded, of giving the National Union of Neckstretchers a shot in the arm?

This business is much odder than you might think. Capital punishment was abolished in Britain in 1965; since then, no fewer than 15 parliamentary attempts have been made to restore it to the statute book, all of which have failed. When Labour was in office, there was really no serious chance of the great majority of Labour MPs were (and still are) against it, and there was always a substantial number of Tories willing to go into the No lobby as well. Nevertheless, there were regular

attempts, presumably for demonstration purposes; by keeping the death cell warm until a Tory majority could be assembled, they would be ready for the lovely sight of the black cap. When Labour fell, in 1979, the Tory advocates of capital punishment retired to the Hanging Gardens of Babel to toast success; to their surprise and dismay the first attempt failed, and every attempt since then has been debated, usually by a larger majority than the previous tally, despite the fact that the ensuing Conservative governments had much bigger majorities than in 1979.

The hangers have tried every path into their beautiful dream; hanging only for premeditated murder, for the murder of children or policemen - every form and ruse has been rebuffed. The most recent attempt was made only two and a half years ago; the trick was to give juries trying murder cases the right to recommend (only recommend) capital punishment. Yet even that plan was defeated, in a free vote on both sides of the House, by a majority of 123.

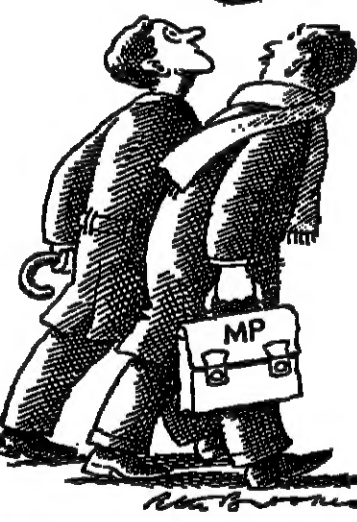
It should surely be plain that the longer the span of time since capital punishment was abolished, the weaker will become the passion for its restoration. After all, an entire generation has been born and grown up in a land where (like almost all European lands, incidentally) capital punishment is unknown. I am sure there are many MPs who think that capital punishment might help to keep down the murder-rate (it will not) but who would recoil in mingled embarrassment and revulsion at the very idea of passing a bill through all its stages and then advertising for hangmen, training them (*quis custodiet*), building scaffolds and finally watching the first poor devil to draw the short straw.

Of course, we are told that MPs' postbags are stuffed to bursting with demands from their constituents for the restoration; certainly, the Tory party in conference is so



given to screaming - literally screaming - for the stretching of necks that the organisers of the conference (the rule was imposed some years ago) have to make sure that the hanging debate is fixed for a time which makes it difficult for the television companies to show more than a few moments, if that, of the edifying howling for the compression of windpipes, so revolting is the sight and sound. As it happens, I already knew Waddington was an inadequate Home Secretary, but if I had not I would have deduced it at once from his shallow, stale, sycophantic speech on crime and punishment, which had the howls and screams on their feet, particularly when he announced that there would be another parliamentary chance for the restoration of the Bourbons.

Now, happily, we have a new man in the Home Office, one who voted against capital punishment last time round - as did the new prime minister, while his predecessor voted for it, as indeed he had consistently done. As before, the neckstretchers have tried to find the easiest path to their goal; apart from the special categories mentioned above, they propose a cumbersome and meaningless system of special consideration by the



Court of Appeal when a capital sentence has been handed down; some have also, rather less attractively, kept the word "hanging" out of their proposal, though hanging is what they are after.

They will be defeated, as they must know, and they will be defeated by a larger majority next time, and a yet larger one the time after that. This passion for a lost cause, therefore, seems to need a psychological explanation, which I am in no position to supply. But when you think of the astonishingly small number of murders in

Britain, even including the sectarian and terrorist ones in Northern Ireland, does it not seem very strange that so many MPs, who have many more pressing and important matters to attend to, are obsessed by this one - obsessed to the extent of repeatedly courting defeat with an ever-diminishing chance of achieving success?

Moreover, when the figures are examined, a very substantial proportion of murders turn out to be of a kind that even most of Waddington's hangers would not wish to visit with the extreme penalty: the murder of a brutal, drunken, wife-beater, say, by a woman driven beyond endurance, or a mother on the edge of breakdown who kills a child born hideously deformed both physically and mentally. These killings are murder under our law, but few, I think, would want hanging for them. The result is that the number of what might be called exemplary hangings shrinks to practically nothing; is it not strange, as I say, that so many Tory MPs are still implacably determined that Mahomet shall one day come to the mountain, no matter that the mountain has long ago been razed to the ground?

And what about those postbags? If the Tory conference has to be persuaded to prevent the nation seeing it, fangs bared, bayonets fixed, and the parliamentary timetable hurried along so as to get the hanging debate forgotten long before the election, does not that suggest that the nation as a whole is by no means as rope-loving as the rope's parliamentary supporters claim?

Perhaps we could enshrine the hanging debate (and what about flogging - why don't the floggers even get a discussion, let alone a debate?) in one of those bits of parliamentary procedure still lying about from centuries ago (such as the rule that an MP wanting to raise a point of order during a division must do so sitting down and wearing a hat), their purpose long since forgotten, but their quaintness protecting them from complete abolition.

Let the scaffold-lovers have their debate, and let them be defeated. But to show that there are no hard feelings, let us join them, after the division, in a drink at the Neckstretchers' Arms.

are now collectors' items in their own right. Bonhams expect his 1984 version of "Sunflowers" (inscribed "après Vincent Van Gogh") to fetch £10,000.

Hotter gospel

Even the word of God can be improved with the aid of the experts, judging by the establishment of a communications team at Church House to help the clergy get their message across. It is directed by the Rev Eric Shegog, a former head of broadcasting at the IBA, who will soon be joined by two information officers. Later it will hire a media training officer who, says Shegog, "will teach priests how best to cope with interviews, performing as part of a panel, front-of-camera techniques, that sort of thing."

Such skills will be particularly relevant with the advent of broadcasting deregulation. "We will not be telling the clergy to have their teeth capped but advising

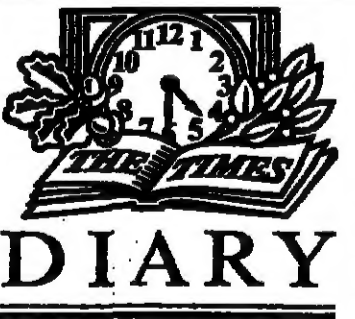
ing on presentation in general terms," Shegog says. "For example, we will tell our people to look carefully at the background they are shown against to make sure it matches the story. Non-verbal communication is important in conveying a message."

Not everyone is thrilled by such media talk. The Rev Bill Westwood, Bishop of Peterborough, says: "The best communication is at grassroots level. The church could survive without Church House but it could not survive without the parishes." But Shegog denies he is jumping on a trendy PR bandwagon: "Communicating the experience of God has been going on since Christ died. We are only updating our techniques."

Aurochs story

Succeeding where Theseus failed, a German scientist has slain the legendary Minotaur. The half man, half bull creature of the labyrinth was, in fact, a cross between domestic cattle and the aurochs, an extinct type of ox, according to Gunter Nobis, the former director of the Alexander Koenig museum, in Bonn.

Nobis reached his conclusion after examining bones found by the British archaeologist Arthur Evans in 1894 at the Palace of Knossos in Crete, which is believed to be the inspiration for the labyrinth. Nobis identified many of the bones as being from the aurochs, which stood just under 5ft high. Crete became a bull-breeding centre and the Minotaur was the ultimate cross-breed, although of a quite different variety from that the legend would have us believe. A load of old bull, one, might say.



Make a canvass

As Bonhams of London prepares to sell another batch of Tom Keating's paintings today, the famous faker can enjoy a posthumous laugh. Seven years after his death, experts still cannot agree exactly how many of his forgeries are masquerading as originals in galleries and private collections.

When the former Navy stoker was unmasked, he admitted to 2,000 fakes, purporting to be by artists such as Titian, Constable, Turner and Monet, and his "Sexton Blakes" (as Keating called them in rhyming slang) were subsequently discovered in galleries all over the world.

But the art fraternity fears there are many more. "He started painting and restoring when he was 20, and continued right through his life for nearly 50 years, so no one has any real idea how much of his work is still in circulation," says Nicola Fyfe, who catalogued the Keating paintings for the Bonhams sale. "Probably some of his paintings are still hanging in galleries, but there are likely to be far more in private homes."

There is a small consolation for owners of Keating forgeries: they



From riot to top rating

Once a byword for radical unrest, Essex is now a leading red brick research university, John O'Leary writes

As the new universities celebrate their silver jubilee, none can boast a more dramatic transformation than Essex. The once-notorious campus that Sir Rhodes Boyson suggested would be better used as a grain silo has achieved a level of prestige that would have been unthinkable in former riotous days. In last year's rankings for research, Essex was rated seventh of the 55 universities (or eleventh if a different basis for the calculation is used). More than half of the 16 departments were rated nationally or internationally excellent. Of the other new universities, only Warwick finished in a higher position.

In a system that tended to favour large departments, such a performance by one of the country's smallest universities was exceptional. Flushed with success, the university now hopes to spend £5 million on modest expansion, but is still aiming for only 4,100 students by 1995.

Martin Harris, the vice-chancellor, says: "No university has benefited more than Essex from published performance indicators. We have a successful formula as a small, excellent university, and we have no wish to alter it."

The formula is not only successful but unusual in that almost a quarter of the students have held jobs, rather than having come straight from school; one in five is from overseas and almost as many are post-graduates. Overseas recruiting was undertaken from the start, long before there was a financial incentive, so the university has had no difficulty in keeping numbers up in a much more competitive age. A preference for mature students also predated the current fashion.

It is a mix engineered by Sir Albert Sloman, who steered Essex through its early, turbulent years and retired only three years ago. Professor Harris says of him: "I took over a university built in his image, and there is little I have wanted to change."

The university is the beneficiary of several far-sighted decisions taken in the early days. In the department of electronic-systems engineering, for example, the idea of concentrating on light-current electronics was unprecedented in the 1960s, but has paid off because of the way information technology has developed.

Research excellence, Professor Harris says, has been built on long-term policies of not making appointments



Far-sighted decisions pay off: the study of light-current electronics pre-empted the direction of industry

until a strong candidate has been found, and never deviating from a guarantee to academic staff of one term in seven as sabbatical leave. Spending on the library has also been protected, and the budget is the highest in any UK university outside Oxford and Cambridge.

The emphasis on research inevitably sets up tensions with teaching, especially because some arts and social science departments have as many as 20 students per member of staff. The high proportion of students without A-levels also makes extra demands on lecturers. Although Professor Harris insists that research success comes through hard work outside teaching hours, the president of the students' union, Ian Darby, thinks that the balance of effort is still too much in favour of research.

A mature student and a computer operator, he says: "I have been made to feel small more than once, when lecturers have expected a level of knowledge I have not had. A lot of

them are more interested in research and do not make allowances for mature students."

The union is now relatively moderate, but it takes a long time to live down a reputation as lurid as Essex's. The last serious unrest took place in 1974, but the association survives in the minds of many teachers and parents.

Although Essex still does not attract the volume or quality of applications from school-leavers that it would like, Professor Harris does not believe that this is attributable to any revolutionary hangover. "That's all local people in their sixties talk about, but I suspect that they are now the exception. We have to look at it positively and say that we are not presenting an attractive range of courses as effectively as we might."

The message certainly has got through to those who allocate research funds. A stream of contracts has been coming the university's way from public and private sources. Essex was

chosen, for example, from 120 bids as the location for the first interdisciplinary research centre in the social sciences, winning a £7 million contract to establish the British household panel study to monitor social change.

Like all universities, Essex is now waiting anxiously for the outcome of planning decisions for the next four years. It is thought to be the only university to have had the confidence to ask for a new department in the aborted national bidding exercise. Professor Harris still hopes he will be allowed to make psychology the seventeenth department.

The university would also like to replace the dingy, subterranean entrance with a better welcome for visitors, as well as adding to its teaching and housing stock. But having remained precariously solvent up to now, it is not going to commit itself to expansion it cannot afford. So there will have to be private investment on a scale that would never have been feasible in its riotous days.

Pay that fails to give a reward for good work

The authorities should recognise good teaching



Mr Clarke: committed



Mr Straw: supporter

Even after three years of excellent work by the Interim Advisory Committee (IAC) on teachers' pay, there are still anomalies in the system that need substantial revision. Unfortunately, largely because of the government's policy of placing financial limits on the work of the committee, the IAC has little or no chance of resolving these issues in its final year.

In 1987, the committee said that one of the criteria for the award of an incentive allowance was "excellent classroom teaching". Neither the education department nor the local education authorities both of which interpret this expression. The result is that most allowances have been granted for other reasons, such as responsibility.

This year, the committee introduced greater flexibility by permitting the "acceleration" of a teacher up the standard scale and by allowing local authorities to introduce an extended scale. One of the criteria for such salary enhancement is "performance", but, again, there has been no official interpretation of this criterion. The education department, in its submission to the committee this year, drew specific attention to the ability of local authorities and governors to reward good teachers, but no attempt was made to articulate this concept in management terms. The result is that teachers rarely obtain extra rewards for being good teachers.

This failure of the department and of the authorities should be viewed in the context of the "betting sin" of the pay structure, namely the rewards on the standard scale for teachers who have been in post for eight years or more. This scale, which is supposed to be the key to recruitment, retention and motivation, runs from £9,000 to £16,000 from January 1. It will remain inadequate as long as the education department is in the "vice-like grip" of the Treasury, and the government believes that the problem can be solved by allocating money to specific shortage problems.

Both the main political parties are wedded to the concept of rewarding "the good teacher". Jack Straw, the shadow education secretary, has said that good teachers should be rewarded. Kenneth Clarke, the education sec-

retary, has made frequent reference to the need to pay adequate salaries to good teachers. Neither party, however, has explained how it proposes to translate its objective into reality.

One answer must be to capture the high ground in the debate with the Treasury by arguing that the substantial extra money needed for teachers' pay should be linked to raising quality. This would shift the emphasis from giving relatively small amounts of cash for specific projects, to raising salary levels to figures that really will attract and retain good honours graduates.

The three steps to bring about radical change in thinking necessary for this urgent exercise are:

1. The government has to abandon the idea of limiting

teachers' pay to the inter-quartile range of non-manual private sector employees. This will achieve nothing by way of "real" salary advances for teachers.

2. The salaries of heads and deputies must be set free at the top of the pay structure.

3. The standard scale, which applies to all teachers below head and deputy head level, should be extended from the current maximum of £16,000 to £22,000, which is a more appropriate salary for the top-of-the-standard scale. A bar would be placed across the scale at the current maximum, and all teachers assessed as good teachers in accordance with agreed criteria would move beyond the bar and reach £22,000 in the space of four years, subject to annual reviews of performance. There must be no restriction on the number who can go through the bar.

Many teachers would reach the new maximum because they are good teachers. Certainly, the system should recruit good honours graduates, who will not be put off by an element of performance-related pay. After all, they encounter it in many of the professions or occupations that attract them now.

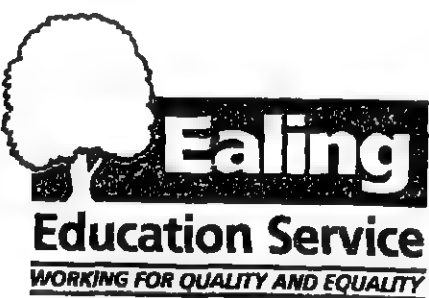
This solution would present all parties with a challenge. The government would find it difficult to resist trying a substantial increase in pay to the concept of teacher quality, even though it would cost several hundred million pounds. The unions would be faced with a proposal that gave many of their members good salaries for the first time in nearly 20 years, while a minority would be stuck at the old maximum, able to move only when they were able to demonstrate good performance.

No answer to teachers' dissatisfaction with pay is perfect unless a government commits vast sums of public money on an unconditional basis. This solution has the considerable merit of squaring the circle by giving the government a guarantee of quality in return for a salary scale that recruits, retains and motivates. This must be good for parents, teachers and pupils.

DAVID HART
The author is general secretary of the National Association of Headteachers.

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POSTS



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Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Young choristers rehearse for last Friday's performance of the *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall in aid of the British Council for the Prevention of Blindness

The greatest story ever sung

This week village churches and grandiose concert halls throughout the land will ring with the sounds of Handel's *Messiah*. Colin Dunne meets some of the performers who have succumbed to its enduring appeal

With the natural gift for understatement, for which their county is famous, the people of Huddersfield can define exactly the merit of the musical event which takes place in their town hall this week. It is, they tell you, the best in the world. When it comes to singing Handel's *Messiah*, they take second place to none.

At this time of year, it sometimes seems that the entire population divides into those who are singing the *Messiah* and those who are listening. From squeaky schoolboys in dusty halls to thunderous operatic professionals in echoing cathedrals, with audiences of proudly undiscerning parents to experts who know every note, thousands of people are involved in this seasonal feast of music. "Christmas hasn't started," a tenor told me, "until we've sung the *Messiah*." It is also one of the few great classical works that crosses the ignorance barrier: everyone can hum a line or two.

For those who take part, at whatever level, it is an occasion. Immaculate in his dinner jacket, Norman Norman will next Saturday evening pour himself a sherry before he leaves home, to ease the tension which may cause his voice to tighten. Then he will go down to St Mary's Church for the performance by the Taunton Choral Society. "When you see the orchestra, and everything starts to come together, you suddenly feel this wonderful atmosphere that you're helping to create and the hairs rise on the back of your neck."

In the modest lives of ordinary citizens, that is not something that happens too often.

The choir will sing only the first

part of an informal evening of Christmas music. Out of 100 voices, of whom three-quarters are women, Mr Norman is one of only seven tenors who are very conscious that they must make themselves heard. The Taunton choir is booming, in a quiet sort of way. With a new conductor, and an increasing membership, they have recently had to leave their school hall to find bigger practice premises. They are determined to become the best choral society in Somerset. Mr Norman, aged 41, is the librarian. Among their members they also have doctors, solicitors and physiotherapists. "It's a bit middle-class, I suppose," he said.

The *Messiah* is a piece of music that also has a special significance for Mr Norman. He sang in a church choir as a child, but when his voice broke at 14, he fled. For 20 years he did not sing a note, until one day he strolled into a performance of the *Messiah* and thought how much he would like to sing again.

The work touches off memories in many people. For Nicholas Kramer, the artistic director of the London Bach Orchestra, which is performing the *Messiah* in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank tonight, it is one of his earliest memories. In Edinburgh, his mother used to play the violin in the production at the Usher Hall every New Year's Day. When he first heard it, at the age of seven, he

found it all so emotional that he burst into tears in the middle of the Hallelujah Chorus. Four years ago, he found himself conducting the New Year's Day concert himself.

Treasurers do not confine their interest merely to musical appreciation. Dr Geoffrey Watts, who looks after the money for the Wymondham Choral Society, near Norwich, has other reasons for being enthusiastic about the *Messiah*. Their Easter production was so successful that they had to put chairs at the back of the church to get everyone in, and they made a profit of £400. They decided to repeat it for Christmas, and the profit means they can afford to hire an orchestra for their performance on Friday.

David Chesterton would like everyone to know that the *Messiah* which he arranged last Friday night was not just any old performance. It was what he calls a choral orgy. As director of the British Council for the Prevention of Blindness, he has the problem of trying to stage money-making events that are simultaneously spectacular and ludicrously cheap. What he does is to hire the Royal Albert Hall, and then recruit a whole county.

This time, it was Buckinghamshire; he sought the help of all the schools and choral societies, and the county youth orchestra. They all practised for three months before

turning up in London, and when they assembled it was an extraordinary sight: a choir of 892 people, mostly youngsters, and not an inch of denim or a trainer in sight. They filled the stage and overflowed into the balcony. It was a triumph for Mr Chesterton, who is 70, but considers that retirement is all rubbish. "And it didn't cost a penny," he says. The result was that he raised £15,000 for his charity.

There may well be more accomplished renditions of the *Messiah* this Christmas, but for sheer enthusiasm and excitement, there will be none that beat theirs. The young Bucks singers looked around at the rings of red plush and could hardly believe it. "Singing here," said 14-year-old Karen Sachs, "I jumped at the chance." Karen had her ham sandwiches, and Matthew Sherratt, aged 13, had two cans of Coke to sustain him.

When they lifted their voices in the Hallelujah Chorus, it must have carried all the way to Chalfont St Giles. Mr Chesterton had to give his eyes a quick dab. "My dear fellow," he said, "terribly sorry, but it always affects me. Three weeks, that's all he took to write it."

He was very pleased with Bucks. Watch out, Kent: he has marked you down for next year.

There are even participation events where the audience turn up with their scores and join in. There is one in the Albert Hall on Decem-

ber 27, with the London Voices Choir and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which is being organised by *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* as part of their Mozart festival. They are playing Mozart's arrangement.

In Huddersfield, you have to be very good indeed to be allowed to sing. In its famous Choral Society, the singers are regularly re-tested. Performing at the highest level, there is no room for sentiment. Recently, a woman who had sung with them for half a century had to tell she no longer met their standards. The Choral enjoys great standing in the town. Tickets are like gold-dust. For the public performance, the 1,100 tickets in the town hall could have sold four times over. The 700 subscribers, who have guaranteed seats at their own performance, bequeath their places to their children when they die.

Robert Drummond, the son of a music teacher from Shrewsbury, chose Huddersfield Poly because he wanted to sing with the Choral. He stayed in the town, and has now sung with them for eight years. Mr Drummond, aged 27, met his wife Sarah in the choir. This week they are both keeping the throat lozenges handy. "If anyone coughs or sneezes round here, people always say: 'It's *Messiah* time again'."

Ask them why the *Messiah* is so popular, and they have a dozen different answers. Wonderful music, full of Christmas feeling, the pleasure of participation... but it was Howard Norman, in his discreet Taunton way, who reminded us of a point that occasionally gets overlooked. "Well," he said, "it is the story of the most important person who ever lived."

Bringing down a round-robin

The seasonal flood of greetings from unbearable paragons of virtue can be stemmed by a simple shock tactic

This is the time of year when other people's lives flash in front of my eyes as, drowning in cards, I open yet another round-robin Christmas letter.

They come from abroad, these letters, where it has long been the style to send out a photocopied letter to your friends at Christmas, regaling them with your last year's activities.

As I sit here, clad in a thermal dressing gown to save on the central heating, battered by the recession, I feel back further at the ferocious energy of my friends' lives.

"Dear People Out There," reads a letter from a Canadian friend, now married, with whom I once shared a ski hut near Montreal. "As I write this, the snow is falling. We've already completed our very intensive requalification courses as Canadian ski patrollers. We were delighted to receive Certificates for Outstanding Service in recognition of our work in the annual ski patrol banquet in the spring."

How is it that she and her husband are still

athletically winging up and down the slopes, when I fell flat on my back in the road last week on just half an inch of ice? When I was living in Canada, I intrepidly kept up with my flatmates. I tottered round skating rinks, fell in and out of canoes and zigzagged wildly down ski slopes. But as I now head for the Age Concern Christmas party, my Canadian friends are still whooping it up, obsessed by the outdoor life.

"Gerry has become a true tennis fanatic, playing several times a week both summer and winter," says a crisp letter from Ontario. "I went on a squash tour to Germany in May. We played at eight different clubs on eight consecutive days. The squash results on the domestic scene were quite satisfactory too, though once again the title eluded me. But I will keep at it."

Sending off strong feelings of inadequacy, I reach for my anti-stress herbal tea. The more vigorous their activities, the more debilitated I get. And vigorous is the word.

"Dear People Wherever You Are," says another letter. "The Christmas trees inside and out are lighted, and presents are wrapped and under the tree, the wood for this winter and next is cut and split." Next winter's wood cut? What paragon! I can't think as far as New Year's Day. "Our vegetable garden was a success this year," informs another paragon. "We used raised beds and

enriched soils, but we can't grow corn because of the racoons."

The sons, daughters and even grandparents of my friends seem to have spent the year in overdrive. "Nan came to stay with us this summer. She was 70 this year and we were proud at her achievement of swimming three laps round the pool every morning. "Andy is enjoying his work selling microwave ovens, stereos, televisions and cellular phones. Fay graduated from Waterloo University in geography and environmental studies in May and Holly is now the manager of an equestrian farm."

Were my friends and their families always like this? The only game I play is snooker, and even then I tend to lean heavily on my cue. I thought perhaps such rejuvenation was confined to Canada, but the latest round-robin from a friend, now a proud mother in Zimbabwe, shows disconcerting similarities: "The boys are both very sporty. And whatever sport they play, they land up in the first team."

So far, I have had only one round-robin from Australia, which I opened auspiciously. But there was, thank God, no sport this time. Instead it was a friend who had gone domestic, writing careful descriptions of her year's entertainment: "We had little Dylan dedicated on July 11, then on the following Monday we had a big buffet for Janine and George's 25th wedding anniversary. Dick's 50th birthday, and Craig's 21st birthday - all combined. I bought a sucking pig and had to cut off his head, trotters and tiny tail..."

I stopped reading at that point. Others can give their glittering, trotter-ridden dinner parties. I am content to live on chocolate, intermixed with take-away kebab and the occasional cup of Bovril.

"And what about you?" is the invariable scrawled, handwritten note at the end of these letters. "Having an exotic time in London? Off to South America again? Doing another book? Do write."

But how can I? I cannot compete with the onslaught of their news. My last year's activities could be neatly encapsulated in three lines. So I am scribbling the same hasty note on my return cards. "Sorry so rushed, but Christmas is tough when you have an alcoholic lover." Perhaps next year, shaking their collective heads in sorrow at my unparagon-like behaviour, they will drop me from their Christmas round-robins.

JOY MELVILLE

The sons, daughters and even grandparents of friends seem to have spent the year in overdrive

God gets a new image

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THE TIMES
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SUPPLEMENT

The only authority

In the beginning
were the words
and music. The
casting of God
came later

FOR a man chosen from among many to play God, Ken Page is remarkably humble. He has resisted the temptation towards egocentricity, although he has acquired a distinctly patriarchal air. If he appears to look down on the world, it is probably because he is several inches taller than most. Page is the star of *Children of Eden*, the first West End musical of 1991, which opens in January at the Prince Edward Theatre.

Mr Page won the coveted role after some resistance from Equity about hiring an American and, at one stage, in the face of the suggestion that a black female God should be considered. The actor, who comes from inner-city St Louis, Missouri, has developed his own idea of God. "I think God is everything. God is in the water, the air you breathe, the earth you grow your food from. God is the similarity that I feel in everybody, no matter where they come from, their race or religious belief."

"In the show the issue I am concerned with is that in the Old Testament, He is a very vengeful God. I really want the audience to know that He is also a father who cares, that when He expels Adam and Eve from the garden it hurts Him as well."

It is not difficult to imagine Page hurling thunderbolts about the world, wrestling with Jacob across the ford of Jabbok, or berating the disobedient Israelites. Yet he accepts he is not everybody's embodiment of God. "Even in the States, black Americans are still presented with the image of God as a white man with long white hair and a white beard."

Children of Eden, with a book by John Caird, co-director and adapter of *Les Misérables*, and lyrics and

music by Godspell creator Stephen Schwartz, tells the story of the book of Genesis. The show begins with the creation of the world and ends as Noah's Ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. It is in Genesis that mankind is given "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth." Page says: "Children of Eden will make people aware that we are all children of Eden. We are the only ones who can destroy the land. If we do not think fast we will not have anything that remotely resembles Eden, anywhere."

Page attended Catholic schools for 15 years. "I grew up in an interesting time for the Catholic church in the States," he says. "It was the time of the Vatican Council. When I started going to church, mass was in Latin. I went to confession on Fridays and became an altar boy. When I was in third grade, the church changed immensely and I started doing the mass in English."

"I was pretty devout and considered going to the seminary like my cousin." He changed his mind when his cousin left the priesthood because the church refused to let him work in his home parish, and instead wanted to send him to a white, wealthy area of the city.

That shifted attitudes in the family about where the church was at that time. There were not a lot of black priests

and I felt I would have come up against the same thing. I would say now that I am more spiritually focused than religiously focused."

A beautiful voice secured him a place in the school choir. He remained a tenor for many years, until a part in *Cats* forced him to develop a lower register. Playing Old Deuteronomy, the vicar's cat, was the perfect preparation for playing God, he says.

His career began in 1976 in the all-black revival of *Gypsy* and *Dolls* on Broadway. He won the Theatre World award for his role of Nicely-Nicely Johnson. He was the cowardly lion in the musical *The Wiz*, and was in the original cast of *Ain't Misbehavin*.

ALTHOUGH born into a black community, he was sent to the predominantly white high school of Bishop Du Bourg in St Louis. "I had a wonderful teacher, a nun who fought for me and my best friend to go to this school."

"I went back to the school three years ago to do a concert. It was amazing to see so many black faces. When I was there, there were 28 black students in a school of 2,300."

His upbringing also coincided with the Sixties civil rights movement. "When I look back on my childhood, I guess we were poor but I never felt poor. I always had what I needed, and to a degree what I wanted. People often say, 'Did you grow up in a ghetto?' I say no. I grew up in my home."

Mr Page has no delusions about his own godliness. "It would be stupid to get involved in an egocentric way. I have my own self-worth coming to the role, so I am not looking for it to identify me. I have had enough experience to keep all that in perspective."

RUTH GLEDHILL



Ken Page: "I would say I am more spiritually focused than religiously focused"

At last! A present that I'm really going to enjoy.

"Thank goodness it's not more handkerchiefs. I think I'll treat myself to a floribunda rose. No, I'll put it towards a garden chair... or maybe new secateurs. I know - I'll go down to the Garden Centre and see exactly what I'd like."

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BRIEFING

Back with the family

A CASTING coup in Basingstoke: when the Horseshoe Theatre Company stages *The Forsyte Saga* next month, the part of Irene will be taken by Nyree Dawn Porter — the New Zealand-born actress who mesmerised most of Britain in the 1960s, playing the same part in the BBC TV adaptation. Now she stars in *Pat* and Derek Hoddinott's stage version of Galsworthy's novel, which concentrates on the Soames/Irene marriage. After opening at the Haymarket, Basingstoke, on January 10, the production will embark on a national tour.

Mackintosh clean

DESPISE the Sixties civic vandalism which robbed Glasgow of a number of Charles Rennie Mackintosh gems, enough survived to provide a "Mackintosh trail" for architecture enthusiasts during this year of culture. Last week, one of the finest, Scotland Street School, was reopened as a museum after a £1-million restoration by Strathclyde Region. The building dates from 1906 and functioned as a school until 1976. Scotland Street School will, however, soon be trumped by The Art Lover's House, a Mackintosh competition design which has been realised in Bella Houston Park, some 90 years after its inception.

Last chance...



No One Sees the Video Cells
Irene and Stephen Tompkinson

HOW to persuade nice English people to buy frozen pizzas and sanitary towels, and preferably both commodities at once, in great profusion: that is the subject of Martin Crimp's bleak, intelligent comedy, *No One Sees the Video*. It is written with an insider's knowledge of the advertising industry and those who inhabit it. The final performance, at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs (071-730 2554), is this Saturday.

MUSIC

Tails go, but heads are hard to find

Has the latest attempt to popularise classical music faltered? Richard Morrison reports on a sobering experience at the London Arena

A Radio 1 presenter gushed girlishly over Christopher Warren-Green of the London Chamber Orchestra. "You're getting away from all that starchy white-tie-and-tails stuff, then," she noted, demonstrating her acute grasp of an LCO press release. "So," she summarised incisively, "you're breaking down all those starchy barriers."

The message was the same all last week — on late-night television, radio chat-shows and in newspaper previews. Watch out; here comes classical music amplified by 30,000 watts; here come smoke machines, light shows, pretty girls, hunky boys. No white tie and tails; no reverential hush. Here come the "Power Proms" at the London Arena.

Did Friday's reality match Thursday's hype? Well, one cannot deny that a programme costing £5 is an innovation at classical concerts. Nor can it be said that many ordinary classical concerts start 20 minutes late "due to bad weather conditions" — especially when the night outside is calm and dry. And some classical-music regulars might have found being among a crowd of about 1,700, in a venue that seats 12,000, a novel experience: rather like being lost in Wookey Hole caves. A leading London orchestra playing in the Festival Hall is doing only average business if it attracts 2,500 people. But how all this helps to break down "starchy" barriers is not clear. Perhaps, however, that was the function of Warren-Green's introduction: "This is Elgar's Introduction and Allegro. Elgar was over 40 when he began to compose. His wife made him do it. I know how he feels." Sparkling wit indeed...

Or possibly it was the task of the lighting. But bathing string players in pinks and blues to suit the musical mood seemed more attuned to the era of Mantovani than Madonna. And the spotlights criss-crossing the auditorium during the opening number, Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, only gave the impression of a lighting man frantically searching for an audience.

Along with all this was an amplification system that made every piece sound as if it should be

accompanying some ice-skater's display of triple toe-loops. Yet the most dispiriting aspects were, first, that some fine playing could just about be detected, before the 30,000 watts worked their obliterating magic; and second, that in one sense the LCO is right. There are barriers to be broken down. The trouble is that they are not the barriers which the LCO thinks they are.

Potentially, there are millions of punters for concerts of the "Your Hundred Best Tunes" repertoire which the LCO offered. The LCO's problem was that hardly any of them were in Docklands on Friday night. For decades, such impresarios as Victor Hochhauser have made tidy fortunes by catering to this market, via Tchaikovsky Nights ("with cannon effects"), Viennese Nights, New World Symphony Nights, and the rest. So in repertoire terms, the London Chamber Orchestra is offering nothing original. Nor is it in the field of presentation. André Previn was also credited with "breaking down starchy barriers" 25 years ago, when he conducted his television concert in a polo-neck jumper.

The real challenge is, and always has been, to move the middle-classes who have no problem with the 1812 overture on to more challenging areas. As the man said in the Crush Bar of the Royal Opera House, during a performance of *Turandot* this autumn: "Hell of a long wait before the World Cup bit, isn't there?"

The difficulty is that to advance as a listener into much of the repertoire requires mental engagement and considerable concentration. If there is a "starchy barrier", it is not stopping people enjoying Bach's "Air on the G-string", but rather, preventing them venturing on to *St Matthew Passion*. No amount of slick packaging has overcome that problem.

That is why the statistics on record-buying given last week in *Cultural Trends* were misleading. They pointed to classical music's share of the market increasing this year from eight to 11 per cent. That seems encouraging. Yet it can largely be attributed to Pavarotti's sales and the Nigel Kennedy recording of *The Four Seasons*. Logic suggests that the



LCO string players, bathed in pink and blue at the London Arena on Friday: are they more redolent of Mantovani than Madonna?

sort of buyers who purchased Kennedy on the strength of a massive advertising campaign, and Pavarotti's version of "Nessun dorma" on the strength of the remarkable free endorsement by the BBC's *World Cup Grandstand*, are liable to have their tastes shaped more by the next blitz of hype (from wherever it comes) than by further exploration of the classical field.

There are, though, those who hold a more optimistic view. Such a figure is Raymond Gubbay, now Britain's leading purveyor of classical-pops concerts. Gubbay left school at 16 and served a brief apprenticeship with Hochhauser (his now-famous job interview by Hochhauser consisted of three questions: "Are you Jewish?", "What school did you go to?" and "Can you start on Monday?"). Then, in the mid-1960s, he broke away and began touring light-classical shows to the new civic halls that were springing up across

Britain. But his big opportunity, as he admits, came with the opening of the Barbican in 1982. He is the commercial promoter *sans pareil*: "People vote with their feet. We rely totally on the box office, and if people don't come, the company suffers. I've got to get it right."

Gubbay has manifestly been getting it right — from his point of view — for nearly 25 years. His methods would repay close attention by the LCO. This Christmas, for instance, he will present a unique triple bill: "Glory of Christmas" concert will be staged on successive Sundays at the Barbican, Festival Hall and Albert Hall each is sold out. Then there are his "gimmick" concerts: his Valentine's Day specials ("a red rose for every lady in the audience"), or, returning next week popular demand of the tiddling classes, his Teddy Bears' Concerts ("admission £1.50, or £6.50 if you bring a teddy bear").

All of which has made the term "Gubbay concert" akin to abusive language among the loftiest of

highbrow music critics. "They seem to think we devise a concert by writing the 12 most popular pieces of classical music on separate cards, and then picking four cards at random," retorts Gubbay. Doesn't he? "My Barbican programmes have changed a lot in eight years, as public taste has altered. That's the fun of the whole business."

He makes a point of wandering round the foyers during intervals, eavesdropping on conversations. "Distressing on occasions, but vital."

Gubbay maintains that he is doing the subsidised sector a service. "The critics ignore the fact that the classical-music regulars who subscribe to London orchestras are very small in number. A survey showed that, although the South Bank was selling 800,000 tickets a year, these were being bought by only 80,000 people. So breaking down barriers is important. People have to be led by the hand; that's why I do the roses and the teddy bears. People feel comfortable, not out of place."

"But what I find quite strange about the musical establishment is that they seem to resent this. They forget that when you do lead new audiences into the concert halls, these people are not tied to me permanently. They have eyes, ears and brains; they will look around and see what else is on."

Nevertheless, Gubbay does admit that his concerts — or "product" as he usually calls them — play safe. So the central issue remains how to convert the audience for Gubbay's concerts, and for the LCO's, into punters for the more demanding offerings. That is something which the subsidised sector should be working furiously to do, instead of writing off Gubbay's audiences as lowbrow punters not worth the bother. To expect commercial promoters to do it is unrealistic. "It's frustrating at times," says Gubbay, "because when I try to push the frontiers out a bit, I quickly reach the point where people don't come." The LCO will know that feeling well by now.

CINEMA

Tailor-made for European success

David Robinson in Paris eavesdrops on the shooting of an operatic film in which international harmony turns to discord

Filming at night in Paris is so hectic. Irvan Szabo recently discovered this while rounding off the shooting of *Meeting Venus*, David Puttnam's new European production for Warner. French pedestrians are undeterred by tape barriers. Szabo is just setting up a shot on rue Troyenne, near L'Etoile, with his director of photography, Lajos Koltai, when a passer-by peremptorily taps him on the shoulder and asks what the film is about. A courteous man. Szabo pauses, taking in the question. Meanwhile Patsy Pollock, the English casting director, is having a tougher time on the other side of the road humouring a loud drunk who wants to get into the action.

Long past midnight, it is freezing cold and the extras and unoccupied crew members gaze at the scene out of the window of a commandeered, derelict boutique where they huddle for warmth. They will be required until six the next morning. Comedy is hard work.

Meeting Venus is a comic metamorphosis of Szabo's earlier Parisian experiences as a guest director (for *Tannhäuser*) at the Opéra. There are also perhaps memories of a subsequent brush with the Vienna Opera House. The main character is a Hungarian conductor, engaged by the Opéra Europa for a production of *Tannhäuser*, to be broadcast by satellite across the world.

The conductor's dreams of international harmony are soon dashed. The multinational cast is split by petty rivalries, sexual jealousies and bitter political memories. Industrial disputes halt rehearsals. Wagner is at the mercy of a junkie, avant-garde *metteur-en-scène*. Environmentalist terrorists, protesting at the opera, threaten to bomb the premiere. The conductor is rent between a passionate love affair with his Scandinavian diva, his collapsing marriage and the bitter jealousies of several other women admirers.

The central joke of communica-

tion problems is compounded by a mischievous game of linguistic musical chairs in the casting. The Hungarian hero is played by a Franco-Danish stage actor, Neils Arestrup. The American Glenn Close plays a Swedish prima donna, the Swedish Erland Josephson plays a Spaniard, the Portuguese Maria de Medeiros (Anais Nin in *Henry and June*) plays a French terrorist. The French actress Marie Nohay plays a Czech singer, and the Czech Marian Labuda plays a German.

The irony is that this parable on the impossibility of international co-operation has turned out, from the accounts of everyone involved, a model production in terms of morale and efficiency. Despite extensive location shooting in Budapest and Paris, where they were beset by rain, the production remains on schedule.

David Puttnam is visibly enjoying himself, after the multi-million anxieties of *Memphis Belle*. He and Szabo, the Oscar-winning Hungarian director of *Mephisto* and *Colonel Redl*, have been friends since they met in 1985 on the jury of the first Tokyo Film Festival. "It has been a lovely experience. Things worked. In fact I feel distinctly underemployed. My job is usually sorting out problems, and there just haven't been any."

The unit insists, however, that Puttnam has been far from underemployed and that no small part of his genius as producer is his skill in creating harmony even in a mixed crew like this one — the technicians are French, British and Hungarian. "He arrives on the set, and just goes round actually loving everybody," says one of the assistants. "He's ready to listen to anyone, to talk to anyone. But you soon recognise that he never has a conversation that does not have a purpose."

Puttnam, with justifiable confidence, feels that *Meeting Venus* is a chance to prove that the notion of the "European" film is not the chimera it has sometimes appeared. "Irvan's script is an organically European subject. It is a story that could not be made in any other circumstances than with a multinational cast."

Glenn Close plays the Opéra Europa's guest diva; her singing voice is provided by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. Close arrived in Budapest when work was already under way. The Europeans were suspicious and apprehensive about the interruption of a Hollywood



Conscientious: Glenn Close on the set of *Meeting Venus*

for a couple of days she was not called, since she did not appear in the scenes then shooting.

The third day, however, Close, clearly hurt, asked why she had not been called; and explained that she felt it was part of the job to be on set whether she was working or not. The unit was startled by such unprecedented conscientiousness. Thereafter, true to her intentions, Close was on set every day, absorbed, encouraging, jolly, everybody's friend.

"I want to see and know what everyone else is doing. It's my job."

Even though she is not working in the night shoot in rue Troyenne, Close is cheerfully freezing with the rest. Her example is evidently infectious. In the course of the night, several other members of the cast call in for a chat, as if it is the most normal thing in the world. The derelict boutique becomes a social club.

Actors everywhere long to work with Irvan Szabo. Glenn Close finds the experience "inspiring". She has worked in Europe before, on *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Hamlet*, and enjoyed the experience; but it was not inspiring in the same way.

"Irvan is such an elegant and gracious man. He cares about what he is doing, and has respect for the work and respect for the people he is working with. He is very sensitive to actors. With him it is true collaboration."

She agreed to do the part as soon as she read the script. "I loved the

part, although it still needed work. We met in London and worked together for a day to get it right. As it was originally written, it made me quite a bitch, I'm much nicer now."

The scene they are shooting involves Neils Arestrup trying to avoid a young soprano who is in amorous pursuit of him. Having done her own bit before the camera, the actress Johanna Ter Steege (star of *The Vanishing* and *Vincent and Theo*) wryly watches Arestrup fleeing down the street. "What a fool to run away from me!" she remarks off camera. David Puttnam confirms that the women's contribution to the script made the film "much more romantic. I think it is better that way."

The door of the commandeered boutique has by this time mysteriously locked itself. The extras, trapped inside just when they are needed, beat at the windows. Szabo, who jokes with everyone as he quietly, and apparently without effort, gets through take after take, is imperturbable, and waits for things to right themselves.

Given the evident autobiographical content of the story, there is special significance in the character names in the film. The American singer is called Stephen Taylor. The German, Tannhäuser is called Stefano del Sarto, and the French stage manager Etienne Tailleur. Each of these names translates directly into English as "Stephen Taylor". So, as it happens, does the Hungarian name Irvan Szabo.

TELEVISION

A blip on a cloudy screen

EXACTLY a year after the Christmas revolution in Romania, BBC television spent two-and-a-half hours last night looking at its repercussions, in two programmes. Though very different in conception, they came to more or less the same conclusions. Peter Flannery's *Shoot The Revolution* was a play pretending to be a documentary: actors speaking to camera about the slaughter in Timisoara or the demise of Ceausescu were preceded by Freddie Jones as an all-knowing fly observer remarking that seekers after absolute truth would here be disappointed. He thereby neatly absolved the dramatist from any need to reach a coherent conclusion as to what really happened.

Events that could speak for themselves, such as the presidential helicopter fleeing an increasingly hostile crowd in Bucharest, were shown on television monitors for the rest, we were left with a series of unanswered questions. What was the involvement of Moscow? Was a deal done between the old Securitate and the new Salvation Front and, if so, is that why many of the old heavies have managed thus far to stay out of prison? Was the revolution ultimately betrayed, and if so by whom, for what purpose?

But the problem with Romania is that nothing is ever simple: following Flannery's play on BBC 2, BBC 1's *Everyman* wandered around Transylvania observing post-revolutionary real life. Its conclusion was that although the leadership may have changed, older problems, such as the local hatred of indigenous Hungarians, remain unresolved. Religious unrest, an agricultural system of appalling complexity and inefficiency, and a social structure going back if not to Dracula then certainly to pre-revolutionary times cannot easily be summarised within a 90-minute drama, which is presumably why Flannery left those issues alone and settled for a more familiar dramatic conceit: that of the two brothers at either end of the political and social spectrum.

Thus in *Shoot The Revolution* we had Bernard Hill as the idealist if disillusioned teacher and Bob Peck as his equally agonised Securitate brother. To keep events moving, they sometimes had to tell each other who they were and what they did, or a living, so that viewers would not be left out of the family. Then there was Sorcha Cusack as the girl who organised the revolutionary television programmes and Ralph Ineson playing Ceausescu as an old heavy from some Nazi war film.

Complex issues had to be simplified to a point of near-cannibalism: break history lessons were followed by the usual confrontations between old communist hardliners and young liberals with an eye on the West. But you have only to compare this

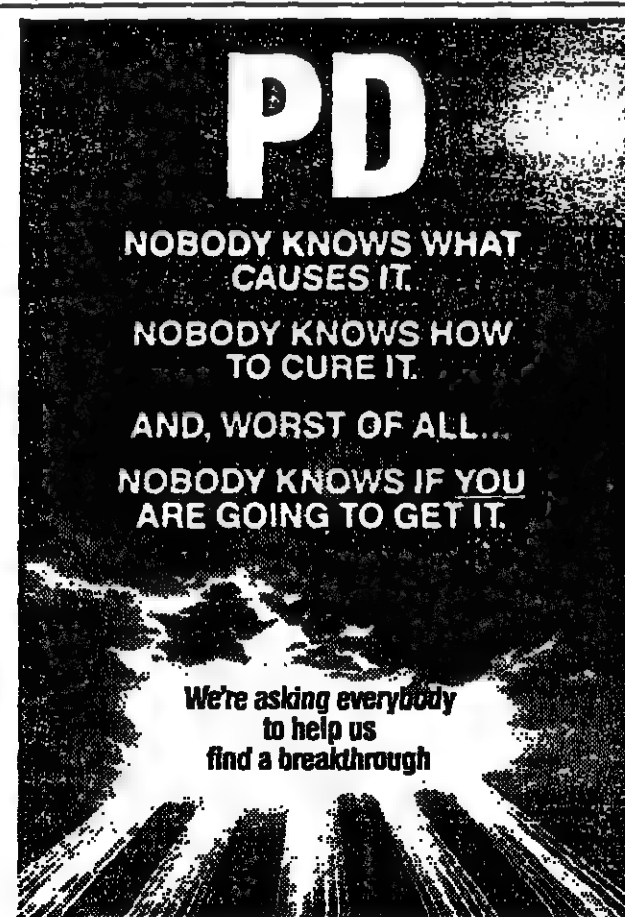
tele-play with David Edgar's *The Shape Of The Table*, currently at the National Theatre, to see how many opportunities for a real debate about the meaning of recent revolution were missed in reaffirming the old preconceptions.

By having no commentary, *Everyman* came closer to the truth: witnesses, all sub-titled, rambling on about how life is in some ways better than before last December, and in some ways worse, and in many ways about the same. The ultimate lesson here was that the revolution, so far from being as climactic or cataclysmic as television has sug-

gested, was merely a blip on a screen that continues to be cloudy and muddled with interference. The tragedy in Romania is about the Romanians, not any single leader of past or present. In the end, the Flannery play could only come out with Freddie Jones telling us yet again not to take anything we saw or heard at face value. By all means shoot the revolution, but do not try as an outsider to understand it.

Everyman wisely grasped that message, leaving the Romanians to speak, if often unauthoritatively, for themselves.

SHERIDAN MORLEY



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me and friends 44 & 55 those before me, more have to put

them before any more lives are lost
Shirley Hall, Nicklaus and James
MacPherson (Oracle)

10.00 News at Ten with Sandy Gall and
Julia Somerville (Oracle) Weather 10.30
Thames News and weather

10.40 Ending Up: The five elderly
residents of Tumpenny-ha penny Cottage
are preparing for Christmas, but their
mundane lives are suddenly brightened
up by a series of events which
degenerate into an orgy of senile
dementia. Adapted by Douglas
Livingstone from a Kingsley Amis story
and starring John Mills and Wendy
Hiller (r)

12.10am The New Avengers. Dated spy
capers with the wooden gang of three
and the touchy touchy devil is
hoping to get his hands on Purdy (r).
Followed by News headlines

1.10 Sportsworld Extra. Tony Francis
introduces highlights of the final round
of the Johnnie Walker Asian Classic,
which has attracted top-notch golfers
including Nick Faldo and Greg
Norman. Followed by News headlines

2.10 World Chess Championship.
Raymond Keene, *The Times's* chess
correspondent, with the latest news
on the series in Lyons between
Keene and Kasparov

2.35 Film. *Clash by Night* (1963 b/w)
starring Terence Longley, Jennifer
Jayne and Harry Fowler. *Bash Bash*
thriller about his criminals en route by
bus from one jail to another. A former
fence, the ex, now a notorious
gangland villain, has bribed the
driver to make a detour. Directed by
Montgomery Tully. Followed by
News headlines

4.00 American College Football.
Arkansas at Tennessee

5.00 ITN Morning News with Anne
Lacey. Ends at 6.00

regret that Thomas did not tackle the arguably more pertinent question of why so many children leave school without reading and writing among their accomplishments. On the other hand *Liberating Literacy* is a message of hope to those who have felt isolated and rejected by their disability and been too embarrassed to come clean (Oracle).

10.00 Paul McCartney: *From Rio to Liverpool*. Paul McCartney's world tour which has taken in Brazil and the United States climaxes in his home town of Liverpool. The programme follows the veteran pop star and his band through the various stages of the tour and includes some of his "Beatles" songs and "Mull of Kintyre".

11.00 James Dean: *The First American Teenager*. Live fast, die young is a phrase which will always bring to mind Hollywood film star James Dean, whose style and attitude made him the fact he died at 24 gave him icon status for teenagers world-wide. Sullen and wild-eyed, Dean provided relief from the squeaky-clean young screen stars of the Fifties. This film by Ray Connolly attempts to separate the facts from the myth through interviews with Dean's contemporaries including Dennis Hopper, Natalie Wood, Sammy Davis Jr and Carroll Baker, together with clips from his three films, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *East of Eden* and *Giant*.


12.30 *Border Radio 1967*. Chris D. Lumsden and John Doe star as members of a rock group who are owed money by a Hollywood club owner. After robbing the club, they go on the run and the group's leader Jay decides to head for the Mexican border. Directed and written by Alton Arce. Enkelt 2.05.

11.00 **Teletext** 11.30 **The 11th Hour** 12.00 **Early Jersey Five**

[illegible]

100

CHRISTMAS
A shocking tale
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HORROR!



mac Eve at the vintners,
men was wringing his hands,
ad asked for Macallan,
was left but mere brands.
words rang in his earhole:
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is bought him some HUMDRAM -
ere's now all in the past!

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CHRISTMAS SUPPLY OF THE MACALLAN MIP, AND
FLATTER YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WITH A WILL.

The Macallan. The Malt.

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● LAW 26
● SPORT 26-32

BUSINESS

MONDAY DECEMBER 17 1990

Britain blocks EC move on drugs cash

From Peter Gullford
in Brussels

BRITAIN is among a group of countries blocking rules that would make money-laundering a criminal offence in the European Community.

Though Britain published tough non-statutory guidelines urging its banks to track down drug-dealers just a week ago, ministers wish to retain the sovereign right to decide what is a crime and what is not. Criminal law, says the government, is not part of the Brussels ambit.

Britain, France and Luxembourg are the only Community countries that have legislation dealing specifically with money-laundering. Of those, just Britain and France demand the reporting of transactions thought to be suspicious. In theory, this could leave British banks at a disadvantage to their less regulated European rivals.

Brussels wants the directive to force EC countries to pass laws making money-laundering a criminal offence. Financial institutions would have to demand the identities of clients and take "reasonable measures" to find the names behind dummy bank accounts.

Britain is at odds with the directive on several counts. The government could only accept a text that stated member countries were responsible for criminal law. The Italian minister chairing the meeting will push for a compromise with this in mind. One solution will be an international governmental declaration in which all member states agree to criminalise money-laundering without appearing to lose sovereignty over criminal matters.

Brussels wants the reporting of all transactions above 10,000 euros (£7,000) to be mandatory, at least for one-off clients. But Britain, Germany and Greece would like this raised to about 15,000 euros. Critics say the directive is toothless, while the Commission retorts that a weak deterrent is better than no deterrent at all. Meanwhile, the council of ministers, which has the final word, has set itself until the end of the year to conclude the directive.

MTM's chief rejects US move

DAVID Fyfe is resigning as managing director of MTM, the specialist chemicals group, after refusing an offer from Richard Lines, the executive chairman, to run the enlarged American operations.

In a statement expected today, Mr Fyfe, in temporary charge of the American business since the ambitious £39 million, equity-financed purchase of Harwick Chemical in October, is said to have turned the job down "for personal and family reasons". He has indicated he will resign before April.

Jim Friederichsen, a former MTM executive but more recently the head of Staley's starch and specialties division, becomes president of American activities today.

Tempus, page 23

Executive Editor David Brewerton

THE POUND

US dollar 1.9400 (-0.0040)
German mark 2.8809 (+0.0028)
Exchange index 93.5 (same)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1701.2 (-3.7)
FT-SE 100 2168.4 (-3.8)
New York Dow Jones 2593.81 (-20.55)
Tokyo Nikkei Avge 24349.50 (-293.47)

FOURIST RATES

Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate
Australia S	2.45	Bank	2.45
Austria Sch	2.45	Bank	2.45
Belgium Fr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Canada S	2.45	Bank	2.45
Denmark Kr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Finland Mk	2.45	Bank	2.45
France Fr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Germany Dm	2.45	Bank	2.45
Greece Dr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Hong Kong S	2.45	Bank	2.45
Ireland P	2.45	Bank	2.45
Italy Lira	2.45	Bank	2.45
Japan Yen	2.45	Bank	2.45
Netherlands Gld	2.45	Bank	2.45
Norway Kr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Portugal Esc	2.45	Bank	2.45
South Africa Rd	2.45	Bank	2.45
Spain Ptas	2.45	Bank	2.45
Sweden Kr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Switzerland Fr	2.45	Bank	2.45
Turkey Lira	2.45	Bank	2.45
USA \$	2.45	Bank	2.45
Yugoslavia Dnr	2.45	Bank	2.45

Rates for single transactions bank only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Customer rates apply to transfers. Circles indicate 12.5% October

Governor backs Chancellor on interest rates

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Governor of the Bank of England has thrown his weight behind the new Chancellor's view that the strength of the pound must take precedence over early cuts in interest rates.

Robin Leigh-Pemberton, interviewed on *Answering Back*, the Channel 4 programme, made clear that he had opposed the simultaneous cut in interest rates in conjunction with Britain's entry to the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System in early

October. His remarks followed a deeply pessimistic survey by the Confederation of British Industry forecasting that output will continue to decline for months. The survey is expected to increase pressure for immediate interest rate reductions.

In an unusually outspoken manner, Mr Leigh-Pemberton said he hoped Britain was "in it for real" where the counter-inflation disciplines of the ERM were concerned.

On the question of an early cut in interest rates to prevent the recession from deepening, the Governor said he favoured

a small cut initially, but only if the economic conditions really justified an easing.

Mr Leigh-Pemberton said that Britain was "somewhere near" where the basic inflationary trend in the economy had been corrected. "Provided we are not too greedy in snatching the advantages that flow from that, I think we might be able to say that we will have a shallow recession out of which we have a recovery which will be soundly based."

He warned against "false hopes" or "false dawn", arguing that interest rate cuts would only be possible after every economic indicator had been considered. But he underlined that Britain's entry to the ERM meant that sterling's position was all-important. "I think the exchange rate is the key indicator."

Endorsing the stance of Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, last week, Mr Leigh-Pemberton said: "I have to say that the exchange rate has assumed new position as a result of our membership of the ERM."

"The important thing is that the market believes that we will lower interest rates... when the economy, our monetary position, the financial position really justifies it. And that it will not be done in response to political pressure," he added.

The interest rate cut in October was widely seen as politically motivated. Mr Leigh-Pemberton said he had written a letter to the government expressing his views about that cut. He said he thought it "possible" that Britain had suffered by cutting interest rates the same day as it entered the ERM.

He went on to say that he felt that the interest rate cut was "premature" and that he felt that Britain was taking its dividend a little before it had been earned.

The Confederation of British Industry monthly survey was the sixth in a row to indicate deteriorating expectations about the volume of output. While 44 per cent of the respondents anticipated falling production, only 14 per cent expected a rise.

The negative balance of 30 per cent is the worst since December 1980. In November, the negative balance was 23 per cent after 17 per cent in October.

Homebuyers face rise in payments

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

MORE than 3 million homebuyers will face higher mortgage payments in 1991 unless there is an interest rate cut in the next few weeks. They are borrowers whose mortgages are reviewed once a year.

The 0.9 percentage point increase in the mortgage rate in March did not affect their monthly payments but now they have to make up for the shortfall between March and November when mortgage rates returned to 14.5 per cent. In most cases, the increases will be small, but will disconcert borrowers who believe the next mortgage rate move will be down.

At the Halifax Building Society, the largest lender, 1.3 million of the 1.8 million borrowers have their payments set on February 1 but changed in April.

If there is no change in mortgage rates before February, a borrower with a £50,000 mortgage will have to find an extra £2.22 a month.

Leads Permanent borrowers could face substantial increases because the society's review usually takes place in October.

Last year, 430,000 borrowers missed the rise from 13.45 per cent to 14.5 per cent in November. This year, the society stopped sending notices of increased payments in October when sterling entered the exchange-rate mechanism of the European Monetary System, and base rates were

cut by a point. At the time, the society hoped for a further cut by the end of the year so that its borrowers could continue to pay at 13.45 per cent. Norman Turner, the head of housing services, says the society is now reviewing the payments and unless there is a cut, the society will probably have to ask customers in January to increase payments.

National and Provincial sets its payments at the end of December. They come into effect in January and February. More than 90 per cent of its 330,000 borrowers are on the annual review scheme and a £50,000 borrower faces a £28 increase per month unless rates change.

Nationwide Building Society calculates new payments on December 31 and informs the 400,000 customers on annual review in mid-January.

The Woolwich Building Society allows its repayment customers to make changes to their payments when interest rates rise or fall. If they do not increase rates when rates rise, they will be encouraged to put it right on December 31.

Barclays operates each annual review for repayment customers on the anniversary of completion. A spokeswoman said that customers who bought homes at this time of year would be paying about £20 a month more on a £50,000 loan.

Institutions may sue over investments in Levitt

By OUR CITY STAFF

INSTITUTIONAL investors in Levitt Group, the collapsed financial services company valued recently at £150 million, are examining the possibility of suing different parties to try to recoup their lost investment.

Four institutions, Chase Manhattan, Legal & General, Commercial Union and General Accident, each paid £7.35 million this year for 4.9 per cent stakes in Levitt. Levitt's liquidator, KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock, believes the company has less than £1 million of realisable assets compared with £10 million declared in the last balance sheet. The liquidators suggest the hole in the balance sheet may amount to almost £40 million.

General Accident and Commercial Union are believed to be looking at recov-

ering more than £7 million each from Chase Manhattan, which published an optimistic prospectus about Levitt at about the time the American bank bought its stake.

The prospectus, which CU and GA say was the deciding factor in their investment decision, said Levitt Group would make profits of more than £13 million this year and valued the company at more than £100 million.

When CU paid £7.35 million in August, this placed a notional value of £150 million on the company and implied Roger Levitt, the founder and chairman of the group, who owned about 70 per cent, possessed a stake worth £100 million.

Figures provided by Stoy Hayward, Levitt's accountant, were also used in the prospectus. At the end of Levitt's financial year in June, Stoy refused to sign off the ac-

counts because of unsatisfactory financial information.

Mr Levitt was declared bankrupt at his own application last week. On Friday, he was bailed on two charges of theft totalling £665,000 and will appear in court again in February.

Peat Marwick has advised Levitt investors and policyholders to check directly with the insurance company named on their documentation to check its validity and if there is an inconsistency, the client should contact the liquidator.

The Serious Fraud Office and the fraud squad of the Metropolitan Police are investigating "allegations of irregularities" in the documentation for about 20 discretionary clients.

Administrators were appointed to Levitt Insurance Brokers on Friday.

Cards a winner for Wace

JAMES MORGAN



Greetings en masse: John Clegg, whose Burgess firm made 70 million Christmas cards

THIS year John Clegg sent 70 million Christmas cards. All of them were delivered by the end of August - to the retail trade. Mr Clegg is chief executive of Wace Group, whose Burgess & Son offshoot produces one in every ten of the 700 million Christmas cards bought in this country. He believes recession has

not affected sales. "If you cannot afford a present, you buy a bigger card," he says. "Greetings card buying is becoming more popular generally. Our turnover has continued to improve."

Burgess, which turns out more than 180,000 cards an hour, should contribute almost £17 million to a Wace

turnover of about £350 million this year. Analysts believe it will make more than £2 million of the group's expected £28 million profit. Wace, the pre-press printing specialist, is one of the few stars of the 1980s tipped to succeed in the 1990s. It is forecast to make more than £35 million in 1991.

Gardner expands in Spain

GARDNER Merchant, the contract catering arm of Trusthouse Forte, has moved into the Spanish market through a joint venture with the Paradis Group, which operates restaurants and has banquet contracts in Barcelona. It will own 51 per cent.

Gardner, the leading contract caterer in Europe, operating 1,200 contracts and employing 10,000 staff outside Britain - in Germany, Holland, France, Belgium and Ireland - is also close to completing its first entry into the Italian market, via the acquisition of a contract catering organisation in Northern Italy.

Garry Hawkes, Gardner's managing director, said: "We see significant potential for contract catering services in Europe and the establishment of the Spanish joint venture is an important addition to our existing European negotiations."

£94m drain on savings

National Savings suffered an outflow of £94.9 million last month despite sales of £154.5 million worth of index-linked certificates. The main repayment was from fixed-interest certificates. Investors withdrew a total of £208.4 million, including accrued interest, and bought only £86.5 million worth of certificates.

When accrued interest of £196.7 million is taken into account, the department made a net addition to government funding of £101.8 million. Income bonds and investment account, which pay interest gross, attracted £101.4 million and £100.6 million.

Allied Partnership may take on Speedlink role

By MATTHEW BOND

ALLIED Partnership, the distribution and plant hire group, hopes to fill the gap left by British Rail's decision to close Speedlink, its loss-making, low-volume freight service.

British Rail decided to close Speedlink after incurring losses of £30 million on turnover of £45 million in the past financial year.

But Martyn Rose, chief executive of Allied Partnership, who is unconcerned by the size of the losses, is in talks to take over part of the

Speedlink service. He still believes in Speedlink's aim, to offer small businesses a rail alternative to road transport. "We aim to be the first time-served freight service in the UK to be run by a private carrier rather than by British Rail," he said.

Allied is already involved in rail freight through Tiger-Rail, its wagon owner and operating subsidiary.

Speedlink's closure threatens to put 1.5 million tonnes of freight back on the roads.

Fraud officers interview Nadir

By ANGELA MACKAY

ASIL Nadir, Polly Peck International's chairman and biggest shareholder, was being interviewed by the Serious Fraud Office and Metropolitan Police last night after his arrest at Heathrow on Saturday.

Mr Nadir, aged 49, flew back to Britain after spending the past month in Turkey and northern Cyprus sorting out the finances of the troubled fresh fruit, electronics and hotels group.

The SFO and the fraud squad of the Metropolitan Police were interviewing him at Holborn police station.

Administrators were appointed to Polly Peck at the end of October after a six week struggle to avoid Britain's biggest corporate collapse.

Shares in the group, which is burdened by debts of £1.3 billion, were suspended on September 21 after news that the SFO had raided the offices of South Audley Management, an investment company owned by a Nadir family trust of which Mr Nadir was the principal beneficiary.

Later that day, Mr Nadir was interviewed by the SFO. Although he protested that the SFO had done him and his company an injustice the damage was done. The value of PPI shares more than halved to 108p before the Stock Exchange suspended dealings. Mr Nadir's paper fortune was cut by £165 million.

The SFO has also been trying to interview Jason Davies, a stockbroker resident in Switzerland, and Elizabeth Forsyth. Ms Forsyth is an employee of South Audley Management, and Mr Davies a former employee. Both came forward and gave one interview with a Sunday newspaper to assert their innocence.

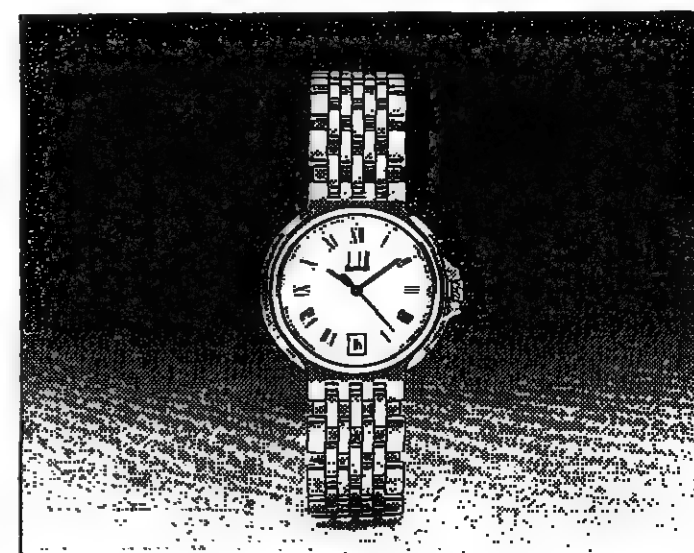
Mr Nadir has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

The company's downward spiral started in August after he declared his intention to launch a bid for the company, only to withdraw the plan five days later. Mr Nadir was criticised by the Stock Exchange for not having taken proper professional advice.

Two weeks ago Mr Nadir staved off an attempt to place him in personal bankruptcy after presenting his creditors with a list of assets to be held as security along with plans to sell them in an orderly fashion. BZW and Shearson Lehman, who between them are owed £22 million, gave Mr Nadir one month's grace.

So far, Mr Nadir has raised more than \$25 million from the sale of Turkish newspapers and his private bank, Impek Bank of Istanbul.

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Power drained by investor costs

By MARTIN WALLER

THE massive public response to the electricity distributors' flotation has landed the 12 companies with unexpectedly heavy costs in keeping their new shareholders in the know.

When the companies report their interim figures, in the middle of next month, they will be required by the International Stock Exchange to take expensive advertising space in at least two national newspapers to report the results.

This is because the registrars will not finish processing the new shareholders' list until at least February. So when the 12 companies report figures for the six months to the end of September over the two-

will not know who their shareholders are.

Advisers to the companies say they have ended up with around twice as many shareholders as they had expected. The final figures are not yet available, but the shareholder lists are likely to range from about 500,000, in the case of the smaller companies such as South Wales, to more than 1 million for the huge concerns such as Eastern and Southern.

Because the allocations in many cases have been so small, a larger proportion than expected of the new investors are likely to remain on the list rather than sell out, taking their minimal profits, and this will mean heavier than expected costs for the companies.

way their companies have been sold off by the government. Many directors feel the advertising campaign, featuring an assortment of horror cartoon characters, was cheap and demeaning, and aimed squarely at the unsophisticated investor. They have therefore been left with the logistical nightmare of servicing a huge and ignorant shareholder base, locked in by the incentives on offer from the government.

At least one chairman, Bill Nicol of South Western, has already made his feelings clear to his staff. A corporate video features him in a balloon answering questions on the flotation, accompanied by Frank N Stein, the character featured in the advertising campaign. At the end of the video, Frank is heaved

AT&T bucks the trend with merger strategy

By ROSS TIEMAN
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE \$6.1 billion hostile bid, formally rejected this weekend, by American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) for NCR, the American computer manufacturer, has reopened the debate about the convergence of computing and telecommunications.

Although the technologies are increasingly interdependent, there is little evidence that engineers and marketing departments need to be in a single corporation to make the most of the opportunities.

While other companies have focused on core businesses in the 1980s, AT&T seems determined a merger will benefit its ailing com-

puter arm and allow it to realise benefits across the board.

The strategy is not new. The NCR bid comes little more than a year after AT&T made its first significant UK acquisition in the shape of Istel, the computer software and systems house spun off in a management buyout by the BL vehicle group. At a stroke, the deal quadrupled the scale of AT&T's UK operations.

AT&T's ambitions for its new arm are not small. With sales in 1989 of £109 million, AT&T Istel is already among Britain's market leaders in the provision of computer networking systems, software solutions and facilities management.

Rover Group, now part of British Aerospace, is still its biggest client.

Istel's links between dealers and car plants carry information ranging from new car and spare orders to accounting. In addition, the company provides software for computerised manufacturing systems.

Istel has also achieved striking success in the travel industry, where its networks enable high street travel agents to check availability and make bookings. There are 270 data networks that span applications from financial services to distribution of electrical goods.

It is this sort of interaction between computers and telecoms that AT&T believes offers huge commercial opportunities. John Leighfield, executive chairman of AT&T Istel, says his brief is to take

the company from number 25 in Europe to the top dozen within five years. He is looking for acquisitions, partnerships and organic growth.

Istel has already absorbed Comet, AT&T's nascent UK computerised message service. The most significant benefit to the UK operation has been the injection of money and know-how. As a management buyout, Istel was never cash-rich. Now it can tap AT&T's resources.

AT&T technicians from Bell Laboratories have been sent to Britain to help develop new value-added services, and to work on applications architecture. The work could never have been funded by Istel alone.

But larger benefits should even-

tually accrue. AT&T's client base, in telecoms and computer hardware, is dominated by global companies. Introducing their account managers to the services Istel can offer is expected by Mr Leighfield to lead to a sharp increase in its business.

NCR investors will this week urge the management to meet AT&T to negotiate an acquisition price. Many are expected to accept the AT&T terms unless NCR can come up with a restructuring package or find a rival bidder. AT&T says it remains determined to carry out the deal, but would prefer to settle on friendly terms. NCR has demanded a \$125-a-share price for negotiations, compared with the \$90 tendered by AT&T.

GILT-EDGED How high base rates give long bonds more sparkle

Statistics are irrelevant; ERM rules. No matter how severe the recession, base rates will not be cut until the pound's position in the exchange-rate mechanism justifies it.

That was the message from Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, last week. He may well turn out to be the bogey man in Mrs Thatcher's worst nightmare — where ERM takes control of the government. If ERM had not already done that, Mr Lamont handed it over on a platter last week.

Of course Mr Lamont did not really mean what he said. He was merely attempting to "talk up the pound" as he has seen his predecessors do so successfully. But he went too far and has talked himself into a corner. He cannot now cut rates while the pound languishes below its central rate, because that will lose him credibility. But neither will the pound rise, as investors know he will surely cut rates if it does.

This was a terrible mistake. If the government had cut rates and justified this in terms of the success of policies to bear down on inflation, then the restoration of confidence and expectation of capital gains would have led to a rise in the pound. Instead, any rate cut could now send the pound spinning downwards.

The Bank of England has to take some of the blame for this turn of events. Entry into the ERM and the departure of Mrs Thatcher has increased the Bank's role in policy making. And it seems to want every piece of the jigsaw in place before rates are cut.

There is danger that, just as rates were raised so slowly as the problems became apparent in 1985, they will now be cut too slowly. The postponement of base rate cuts has affected the short end of the market, but is less relevant for the long end. Indeed, the longer base rates remain high, the deeper the likely

recession and the more attractive long-dated gilts become.

Some writers in this column have argued that gilts look expensive relative to other European bonds. Certainly spreads look narrow. On the other hand, the spread against American bonds, where a recession is also under way and where the dollar has also been performing badly, has been maintained. Does ERM membership make comparisons with continental Europe more valid?

What matters here is risk. If the pound were truly fixed against continental currencies, fund managers could choose with equanimity between different bonds. But that is not the case yet and British fund managers have to maintain their sterling portfolios to match liabilities. Thus their choice is constrained. They cannot always choose between sterling and other currencies; sometimes they are choosing between different types of sterling assets, i.e. bonds or equities.

Graphs of the yield difference between equities and gilts suggest that equities look cheap compared with their performance in the Seventies and Eighties. However, equities are not cheap compared with the Fifties and Sixties. The one major difference between these periods is inflation. ERM membership may bring a return to a much lower inflation environment. Indeed, ERM will probably bring lower inflation via a period of low growth — even worse for equities.

Thus we can see gilts continuing to perform well even though base rates remain high and even though the pound languishes below its central rate inside the ERM. The economic picture presents a much bigger problem for the Conservatives than for the gilt-edged market.

GLENN DAVIES
Credit Lyonnais Securities

Trump set to pay \$34.4m on casino junk bonds

From PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

DONALD Trump, the American property and casino businessman, is expected to pay \$34.4 million to holders of junk bonds on two of his casinos today.

About \$16 million is due on \$250 million worth of junk bonds sold to finance the Trump Plaza casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and \$18.4 million is expected for holders of bonds on the Trump Castle casino, which was payable on Saturday but gained an extension because the deadline was at the weekend.

The prospect of payment on time represents a sharp turnaround for Mr Trump, whose \$2 billion empire had to be rescued by almost 70 bankers this summer.

As a result of the \$65 million rescue package, which reduced some of the rates of interest and suspended other payments, the Trump Organisation is believed to be sitting on millions of dollars.

Mr Trump's financial troubles were triggered by a failure to pay \$43 million in interest payments to bond holders of the Trump Castle.

If Mr Trump fails to pay the Trump Castle holders this time, he will have a ten-day period of grace before the

casino can be forced into bankruptcy.

Last month, Mr Trump almost lost the Taj Mahal, which has been described as the most glittery of his three casinos, when he failed to pay \$47.3 million due on \$675 million worth of junk bonds. A deal struck with the bond holders gave them 30 per cent of the casino's equity in exchange for concessions on interest rates and repayment periods.

New Jersey casino regulators, who had been examining the deal and the casino's finances, and with the power to revoke its gaming licence, approved the Taj Mahal agreement on Friday.

Cash dried up after the recession frightened off the nickel-and-dime gamblers needed to generate the money to pay bond holders.

The problem was forecast earlier this year by Marvin Roffman, a casino analyst for 12 years.

He was dismissed from a Philadelphia stockbroker after saying that the Taj Mahal would not generate enough cash to pay its debts.

Mr Roffman is suing Mr Trump for compensation and punitive damages of more than \$1 million.



A taste of expansion: Richard Blandy, chairman, has bought two more hotels

Blandy builds on hotels

BLANDY Brothers, best known as a leading shipper of Madeira wine for nearly 200 years, is expanding its hotel empire, founded on the legendary Reid's Hotel in Madeira's capital. The company has already spent about £8 million on hotel acquisitions in England.

Reid's is the biggest part of the Blandy business, which also includes a travel agency, a shipping agency, a Lloyd's agency and orchid culture.

The hotel in Funchal accounts for about a quarter of the business and the Madeira wine for less than a tenth.

Reid's, which celebrates its centenary next year, has just reopened after a three-month closure for refurbishment and

expansion. Richard Blandy, chairman of Blandy Brothers, and the sixth generation of the family to run the business, would not disclose the bill for the refurbishment but said: "It has cost a lot of money."

Blandy's, still very much a private business, met the cost from its own resources, as it has with its other hotel acquisitions.

The expansion gives Reid's four restaurants and additional bedrooms.

Mr Blandy, an admirer of the Savoy group's approach to hotel keeping, is putting together a Blandy group of quality hotels. There have been two acquisitions so far.

The first was Bishopstrow House, a 32 bedroom hotel built in 1817 at Warminster in

Wiltshire, which offers elegance and country pursuits. It is estimated to have cost more than £4 million.

The most recent purchase was the 14th century Coswold hotel, Charingworth Manor, near Chipping Camden, which has 19 bedrooms and may also have cost approaching £4 million.

There are no more hotel acquisitions in the pipeline. Mr Blandy said: "The timing is not yet right."

He is pleased at the financial performance of the Blandy hotel interests.

The Madeira tourist trade has benefited this year from the troubles in the Middle East which have driven tourists westwards.

Reduced SecPac debt rating 'unjustified'

By OUR CITY STAFF

ROBERT Smith, president and chief executive of Security Pacific, claims the decision by Standard & Poor's, the credit rating agency, to cut the bank's debt ratings last week was "unjustified".

Mr Smith said: "The announcements we made earlier this week to strengthen our profitable core businesses, increase our reserves for credit losses and disband our merchant bank will result in substantially stronger and more consistent future profitability."

Security Pacific estimated last week that it would incur a loss of \$320 million to \$360 million in the fourth quarter, but still expected to earn between \$160 million and \$200 million for all of 1990. The company, which plans to take a charge of \$200 million to cover the costs of disbanding the merchant bank, said the fourth-quarter loss provision would be increased to about \$600 million and that it would add \$50 million to its provision for disposing of property. S&P responded by downgrading the group's senior debt, and that of several subsidiaries, to single-A from AA minus.

Analysts fear that it might need higher loan loss provisions and restructuring charges. Some analysts have lowered their 1991 earnings estimates.

One analyst said the restructuring charge may not be enough because the assets being sold or liquidated are in countries with weak markets.

American store price war in drive to lift flat sales

From OUR CORRESPONDENT IN NEW YORK

AMERICAN retailers entering the crucial last eight days of Christmas shopping are offering unprecedented discounts and incentives to avert what many fear will be their worst Yuletide for years.

Shopping started slowly in what is regarded as the 30-day buying period, and despite large crowds, leading retailers report flat sales so far in the three-months ending in January that usually accounts for between a half and three quarters of profits.

One executive said: "The shops are full, but no one is spending." As the season started at the end of November, only half the 1,262 retailers surveyed by Deloitte & Touche expected to show gains. In a consumer survey last week by Leo J Shapiro & Associates, 46 per cent expected to spend less on gifts this year, 29 per cent about the same and only 25 per cent expected to spend more. Re-

tailers are pulling out all the stops to attract customers. A price war is raging in the \$16.8 billion toy industry. Sears Roebuck, the largest retailer in America, is holding its "After Christmas Sale" before Christmas, and Macy's, the debt-burdened department store, has taken full-page advertisements in newspapers and magazines to assure everybody that it is not going into bankruptcy.

Habitat is cutting 30 per cent from prices, tailors have slashed 50 per cent from suits, and electrical retailers 60 per cent from televisions and stereos; some offer zero interest with no down payment and no payment until March, and furriers say they are facing a slump.

One men's shop is staging a buy-one-get-one-free offer on shirts, jumpers and ties, and a luggage company is offering the chance to win two tickets for the Super Bowl American

football final or a holiday to anyone who walks through the door and fills in the competition form.

In toy towns, the competition is even worse. Wall Street analysts downgraded their 1991 and 1992 profit forecasts when Toys "R" Us, America's largest toy chain, cut 22 per cent of the market, with prices on \$100 million worth of older toys and games by up to 75 per cent.

It was responding to an attack from Child World Inc, its nearest competitor, which launched a fierce round of price cuts to generate cashflow after telling its suppliers that they would have to wait six weeks to be paid.

Against the trend, Brooks Brothers, the upmarket store owned by Marks and Spencer, is not discounting items and is running adverts saying: "The golden rule of giving? Shop for others as you would have them shop for you."

Britain tots up almost £22bn of alcoholic drinks in 1990

By MICHAEL TATE

GIVEN a reasonably merry Christmas, spending on alcoholic drink by the British in 1990 will be almost £22 billion. The figure represents a rise of 10 per cent in seven years in real terms, according to Verdict Research, whose survey on off-licences, published today, estimates that more than a quarter, worth £5.4 billion, was consumed in customers' own homes.

The report confirms that Britons are buying much more of their take-home drink from the supermarket chains. J Sainsbury and Tesco emerge as the two biggest retailers of alcohol with 7.9 per cent of the market apiece. Altogether the

grocery market is estimated to have captured 47 per cent of the take-home trade.

Verdict believes the big drinks groups, such as Whitbread, Allied-Lyons, Bass and Seagram, which own six of the seven biggest off-licences, have only themselves to blame for losing a large chunk of their market to the supermarkets.

They have neglected to use their financial power to defend their position, the researchers believe. This "flawed strategy", under which the off-licences were used as "little more than a convenient method of selling parent company products

under uncompetitive conditions", has left the specialists, who once dominated the market, with only 42 per cent.

Recent increased investment in chains such as Thrashers and Victoria Wine should ensure that market share stabilises, says Verdict, which forecasts a further 49 per cent rise in consumer spending on take-home drinks by 1994 to £7.4 billion, assuming annual inflation of 5 per cent.

Verdict predicts a slump in champagne sales this year. It blames dramatic price increases triggered by sales growth meeting supply limitations.

US brokers face results-linked pay

BROKERS on Wall Street are being asked to take more of their pay in performance-related IOUs than cash next year (Philip Robinson writes).

This trading and vanishing profits mean the cash bonuses of most Wall Street firms will shrink by between 30 and 50 per cent this year. At least three investment banks are thinking of changing the way staff are paid and motivated over the next five years.

Shearson Lehman Brothers is considering turning the clock back at least six years and restructuring the American Express-owned broker into a quasi-partnership with "phantom equity". This

would be created by removing 10 per cent of the bonus of about 80 top executives in the first year, and 20 per cent in future years, to invest in a pool whose return would be based on Lehman's performance.

Merrill Lynch, the largest American broker, with 10,500 salesmen, will begin to motivate loyalty among its registered representatives by offering a \$100,000 bonus after ten years' service.

Up to that time, brokers who join the firm will be paid a basic as low as \$20,000 and a bonus every four months depending on how much commission they bring.

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Notice is hereby given that a balance of the Register will be struck on Friday, 4th January, 1991 for the preparation of the half-yearly dividend payable on the SECOND PREFERENCE SHARES for the six months ending 31st January, 1991. The dividend will be paid on 1st February, 1991.

For Transferees to receive this dividend, their transfer must be lodged with the Company's Registrar, Lloyd Banks Plc, Registrar's Department, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 6DA, not later than 3.00 p.m. on Friday, 4th January, 1991.

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J.A. CUNLIFFE
COMPANY SECRETARY
Shell Centre
London, SE 7NA
17th December, 1990

This advertisement is issued in compliance with the regulations of the Council of The International Stock Exchange of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland Limited ("The Stock Exchange"). It does not constitute an offer or invitation to any person to subscribe for or purchase any shares.

Application has been made to the Council of The Stock Exchange for the grant of permission to deal in the issued ordinary shares capital of the Company in the Unlisted Securities Market of The Stock Exchange. It is emphasised that no application has been made for these securities to be admitted to listing. It is expected that dealings will commence on 20th December, 1990.

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United Kingdom Banks and Members of the Stock Exchange should mark payment of the dividend in the appropriate square on the reverse of the certificate.

All other claimants must complete the special form and present this at the above address together with the certificate(s) for marking by the National Westminster Bank PLC. Postal applications cannot be accepted.

DATE: 17 DECEMBER 1990

Mortgage Rate Change

AIB Bank announces that its Home Mortgage Rate will change to 14.6% with effect from close of business on 17th December 1990. APR 15.7%.



Bankcentro-Britain, Belmont Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3SA. Telephone (0895) 72222
And branches throughout the country.
Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c.
AIB Bank is the business name of Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. Incorporated in Ireland. Registered Office, Bankcentro, Ballsbridge Dublin 4. Registered in Ireland, Number 24472.

JONATHAN PRYNN

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Who will devalue, Lamont or Smith?

ECONOMIC VIEW

ANATOLE KALETSKY

The new government's honeymoon is all but over. Norman Lamont's refusal to cut interest rates before Christmas, highlighted by his pugnacious speech in parliament on Wednesday, marked the beginning of the end. By stating without a hint of ambiguity that "there can be no question of a reduction in interest rates which is not fully justified by our position in the ERM", Mr Lamont defied the first two commandments of monetary policymaking: never make promises in public and never make unbelievable statements, even if you think they are true.

In a bizarre twist on previous monetarist dogmas, Mr Lamont is, in effect, promising to set British interest rates at whatever level is necessary to stabilise the German money supply. Does Mr Lamont really expect investors to believe that he will sacrifice the Conservative party's re-election chances to this new totem? If so, the government may have to pay dearly for his naivety.

For Mr Lamont's chances of cutting interest rates within the ERM strait-jacket are unlikely to

improve as the months tick by. On the contrary, the conflict between Britain's domestic economic needs and the disciplines of the ERM will grow steadily worse.

The certainty of declining inflation next year is already fully discounted in the financial markets, but the strong possibility of many less favourable developments are not. At least six come to mind:

□ German interest rates are very likely to rise within the next month or two. The Bundesbank has made clear that it is holding off for only one reason — to give German politicians a last chance to come back to their anti-inflationary senses. Of course, the Bundesbankers know that higher German rates would cause disruption in the ERM and further weaken the dollar. But this will not deter them. They would love to revalue the mark against both the dollar and other European currencies. If a jump in

German interest rates forces the world to accept this, so much the better.

□ If British interest rates are not cut soon, the present recession will surely deepen and this will make the pound even weaker. It used to be thought that a recession could strengthen the currency by improving the balance of payments. But these days weak economies are almost invariably associated with weak exchange rates. This is the clearest lesson from a decade's experience of currency markets dominated by capital transactions rather than trade flows.

□ The longer the recession lasts and the more damage is done to Britain's exporting industries by high interest and exchange rates,

the further the pound will ultimately have to fall to restore Britain's export competitiveness. The savage manufacturing recession caused by the sterling squeeze of the early Eighties was directly responsible for the deterioration of Britain's balance of payments and chronic sterling problems by the end of the decade. Mr Lamont is now proposing a second ride round the same circuit.

□ By linking reductions in interest rates explicitly to sterling's performance in the ERM, the Chancellor has made it more difficult for the pound to strengthen. As soon as sterling approaches its ERM midpoint of DM2.95, it will be undermined by speculation about a cut in

interest rates. In giving speculators a target, Mr Lamont has broken another of the finance ministers' ten commandments.

□ Worse still is the related error of pinning all the government's credibility on the exchange rate. When the inevitable devaluation comes, it will be seen as a political catastrophe and a capitulation in the fight against inflation. Instead, devaluation could have been presented as a pragmatic response to changing external events or even as a mere technical adjustment. It took France six devaluations in eight years to find the parity that has been defended successfully since 1987. Why should we think that Britain hit the bull's-eye first time? Mr Lamont believes that DM2.95 "strikes the right balance" in some platonic sense between the need to bear down on inflation and maintain competitiveness. But is the Treasury more omniscient than the markets? The private sector

does not seem to believe the pound's present exchange rate is sustainable. If it did, 14 per cent interest rates would not be needed to stop the pound falling through its ERM floor.

□ This is the worst point in the electoral cycle for monetary virility tests. If interest rates are not cut soon and the recession deepens, the government's popularity will sink back gradually to the abysmal levels that undid Mrs Thatcher. Financial confidence will be undermined, sterling will weaken and cuts in interest rates will become still more risky. The government will be caught in a vicious circle, spinning ever faster as the election deadline approaches.

Is Mr Lamont tough enough to ignore these pressures? Perhaps he is, but this hardly matters from the investor's perspective. If Mr Lamont loses his nerve he will devalue sterling. If he does not, the Conservatives will lose the next election.

In either case, sterling will be devalued. The only question is whether the decision will be taken by Norman Lamont or John Smith.

TEMPUS

Burmah bid for Foseco may score narrow win



Fighting chance: Tom Long, chairman of Foseco

WILL history repeat itself? In 1981, Burmah Castrol made a hostile bid for Croda International but allowed it to lapse after Croda promised a hefty dividend rise, even though the City was convinced a few more pence on the original offer would have been sufficient to win the day. Now another nail-biting finale is guaranteed as Burmah waits to hear if its 300p cash offer for Foseco is high enough.

The dismay in the City was almost audible when Burmah increased its original offer by just 25p when 30p would certainly have clinched the deal. Instead, Foseco, where Tom Long is chairman, is in with a fighting chance.

To win shareholder loyalty Foseco plans to sell its construction chemicals division, as well as abrasives, and spend the proceeds buying its shares.

Valuing the businesses is difficult but analysts suggest Foseco is seeking about £150 million all told, which would release enough cash to buy in 30 million shares at 300p. At that price, non-taxpayers funds could claw back an additional 67p in ACT, and about 20 such institutions have yet to reach a decision. Metallurgical chemicals, the remaining business, would generate pre-tax profits of about £25 million and earnings per share in line with present levels.

The risk is that no offer emerges for construction chemicals at a price acceptable to Foseco, which would still be required to pay £17 million in special dividends from the cash raised by the sale of abrasives. With no buy-back plan, the shares would fall to pre-bid levels of 186p and beyond.

Burmah's offer represents an exit multiple of 10.5 times forecast earnings, which is hardly generous. But waverers may find the certainty of cash hard to resist. Burmah spends for 24.5 per cent and may have done enough to win control — but by the narrowest of margins.

Anglia/McCarthy

TODAY'S results from Anglia Secure Homes, coming so soon after news of £10.8 million losses at rival McCarthy & Stone, should make it clear that money invested in speci-

alist builders of retirement homes is unlikely to show much return for some time. The problem is not merely the timing of a recovery in the housing market. One can see that coming if one looks far enough ahead. But the recovery in the specialist retirement homes sector looks so far off and is likely to come so slowly that shareholders will be better off investing elsewhere.

On Friday, shares in McCarthy & Stone shed 1p to 33p, despite a stated net asset value of 194p. With John McCarthy, the chairman, admitting that any marked recovery would come in 1991-92 rather than in the present year, dealers can see no further than their forecasts of a second year of losses. Anglia is one step ahead of

its rival, having reported pre-tax losses of £4.45 million last time around and likely to do even worse this year, despite the support of the Commercial Union.

Last year, the £8 million provision Anglia made on its land bank sent alarm bells ringing throughout the house-building sector. Today, attention will be paid to what further provisions the board feels are required 12 months later, especially in the light of the very modest adjustment made by McCarthy.

Both companies are taking the right remedial action. McCarthy has laid off more than 1,300 employees in the past 15 months. The problem is that while conventional house-builders hope to maintain turnover by selling more

houses at lower prices, the retirement specialists have to watch sales dwindling away. When one has spent an adult lifetime progressing from first-time buyer to last-time seller, one is in no hurry to sell.

Despite continuing losses, on long-term fundamentals the shares must be a buy if only because Britain's elderly population is becoming much larger. But today they look ideally suited for the patient.

MTM

THERE is never a good time to lose a successful managing director, and David Fyfe's decision to leave MTM might easily have undermined founder chairman Richard Lines' attempts to rebuild confidence in the wake of its ambitious £59 million purchase of Hardwicke Chemical.

It is as well that Mr Fyfe's departure is accompanied by details of a restructuring that introduces three faces to the boardroom, including former Staley executive Jim Friederichsen, who will run the American operations.

On balance the changes amount to the kind of strengthening that it has been looking for. Admirers of MTM's dashing, entrepreneurial style of the Eighties have needed convincing that the Hardwicke deal would not over-extend the management.

As a result, MTM has seen its shares languish at a discount to its sector, when its fundamentals argue for a premium. Its brand of special chemicals for the pharmaceuticals and fertiliser industries is proving immune to recession.

Mr Fyfe's departure, when the market has yet to recover from its bout of post-rights issue indigestion, could lead to further temporary weakness in the share price. But near 20 per cent growth in earnings is expected this year, with no help from Hardwicke, indicating a prospective price/earnings multiple of about 7.5 at 147p. And Hardwicke will contribute positively to eps in 1991, when MTM should make £24 million pre-tax.

Sentiment meanwhile should be helped by an imminent bullish note from one respected analyst said to be impressed by a visit to Hardwicke. Buy on weakness.

Triple air venture in doubt

EC NOTEBOOK

SIR Leon Brittan, European competition commissioner, has intensified contacts with Belgium and the Netherlands over Sabena and KLM, their national airlines, in the hope of breaking the deadlock over the creation of Sabena World Airlines, a triple venture with British Airways.

Sir Leon told Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Belgian transport minister, and Yvonne Van Rooy, Dutch secretary for economic affairs, that other competing carriers must be given their fair share of flights to and from Brussels and Amsterdam airports before the commission would authorise the new venture.

BA was apparently excluded from the latest negotiations because it is not state-owned, although contact has continued with the commission. BA is still, however, refusing to negotiate, Brussels says, and its commitment to the venture appears to be waning.

The deadline for confirmation of the three-way deal is the end of the month and there is speculation that BA may be using the commission's objections to allow SWA to lapse.

□ THE level of government

funding to prop up shipbuilding has been cut radically in order to bring European shipyards closer in line with their rivals, mainly Japan and South Korea. From January, EC states may pay shipyards only 13 per cent of the value of



Dehaene fair shares

a contract for large vessels, as against 20 per cent. Smaller ships costing Ecu10 million (£143,000) or less to produce may receive just 9 per cent.

The cost-cutting could be exacerbated by softer rules for shipyards in the former East

Germany until they come closer to western standards of competition.

□ CONTINUING its determination to stop countries outbidding each other to attract investment from foreign car firms, the commission has announced it will extend its state-aid regime for vehicles for a further two years. This forces governments and regional authorities to notify Brussels if they plan to inject more than Ecu12 million into a car plant or other project. The rules will now also apply in the former East Germany, a likely host for considerable new investment.

□ TRADE in chemicals used for narcotics is to be more closely scrutinised under a new agreement in principle between EC governments.

They will now be required to pass laws obliging importers, manufacturers and distributors of 12 potentially lethal base substances to keep more detailed files.

Governments could slap an export or import ban on suspicious cargoes and would

be obliged to impose dissuasive penalties. The rules would be even stricter if EC states were not so anxious to avoid interfering with the legal trading of such products.

□ NEW European firearms regulations that set common rules for shooters and their weapons have been provisionally agreed. A national firearms permit would still suffice if the owner wanted to go shooting abroad, but he could eventually be issued with a European firearms card too.

Gunsmiths would have to keep a detailed register of all weapons and ammunition bought and sold. The purchaser would have to be aged over 18 and healthy in mind and body. Governments must list which weapons are strictly banned for public use and lay down strict conditions for the use of other categories of firearms. There are fears, however, that rules obliging Europe's 12 police forces to keep in touch over the movement of all private weapons across borders could lead to severe clogging of police files.

PETER GUILFORD
Brussels

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

View from the centre

OF THE 23 Laing & Cruckshank salesmen and analysts who departed on Friday, only 22 were actually made redundant by the broking house. The odd man out was Tony Herbert, aged 52, a one-time partner of Alexander Laing & Cruckshank, who, after 26 years with the firm, has decided to take early retirement. The remaining 22 were told of their fate at a mass meeting on Friday morning, with chief executive Michael Kerr-Dineen and chairman Gerry Mordant — Alexander Laing & Cruckshank's last senior partner — jointly firing the bullet. Kerr-Dineen denied speculation that there were further cuts still to come in the front office or that the firm would be withdrawing from some areas of the UK equities market. "We are not going to become a niche player or anything like that, we are continuing to cover the full market," Kerr-Dineen said. "Credit Lyonnais" thinking is far more European than most British firms and we are here to stay." He added that the redundancies had been approved at a meeting in Paris with Credit Lyonnais president Jean-Yves Haberer the previous day. "I handed him a statement for approval which

London forms a vital part." He crossed out "part" and wrote in "centre".

Merrill Christmas

ANYONE who thinks that stockbrokers, like policemen, are becoming younger and younger these days, would have had a shock if they had walked into the Ropemaker Place offices of the American securities house Merrill Lynch yesterday. For during the day about 400 special guests were to be found sitting at the firm's countless dealing desks, talking animatedly on the telephone. But there was not a Jason Donovan haircut or a

OAP'S FREE PHONE CALLS



pair of Wall Street braces to be seen. They were all old age pensioners. The idea, dreamt up by Merrill Lynch chairman Bill Schreyer and put into operation many years ago in New York, is to invite selected pensioners into its offices and to permit them up to half an hour each on the telephone, calling anywhere in the world that they choose. "This was

London," says Richard Spielberg, who helped escort the old folk to their allotted telephones. "Each year we offer this service to about 10,000 senior citizens world wide, usually on the Sunday before Christmas, and the cost is small compared to the pleasure it gives them. We work through suitable charities to find the right people, we provide transport to and from our offices and we give them a glass of sherry, something to eat and a little present from Father Christmas before they leave."

ANY husband wondering what to buy his wife for Christmas should perhaps take note of a sign in a bank in New York: "Give her money. It's always the right size."

Look behind you

GERALD Ronson, who used up many favours before his sentencing in the Guinness trial, when high ranking City men gave glowing character references, has been using up more now he is behind bars in Ford Prison. He has been persuading friends to supply him with Arabian costumes and props. But all have met the approval of the prison authorities as they are for a pantomime by the inmates for handicapped children, with three performances today and tomorrow. The cast does not include Ronson, Ernest Sanders or Anthony Paros. The

title of the pantomime? *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.

Not a muse-d

A NEW award is being dreamt up for next year's annual prats' dinner — an abbreviation for pharmaceutical research analyst teenage scribblers — after this year's event in a Stepey Chinese restaurant. The traditional prizes of a wooden spoon and a brick were presented by Andrew Hitchin, guest speaker and a fund manager and pharmaceutical specialist at Commercial Union. The spoon went to BZW's pharmaceutical team for a Wellcome buy circular and the brick to Robin Gilbert, of James Capel, for a wrong Glaxo recommendation. And although he will have a year to wait, the recipient of next year's new prize is already known — Steve Flagg, who recently left BZW and is due, shortly, to arrive at County NatWest. As a former member of BZW's top-ranked team, he was chosen as the victim for a surprise stripogram. But before the scantily clad woman had finished reading her introductory poem, Flagg gallantly tried to buy her off, by offering her £50. "We then paid her £100 to carry on," says another analyst who was present, "but by that time Flagg had disappeared out of the door. She gave us our money back."

CAROL LEONARD

Extract from the Chairman's Interim statement.

"This important first half year has been a successful one for Welsh Water. A sound income base and effective control of operating costs have been combined to produce a strong financial performance.

"Investment is now being undertaken at approximately double the rate of two years ago.

"Welsh Water has adapted well to life as a publicly quoted company. The management team is running the core business in a manner which brings improvements to customer service, water quality standards, the environment and for shareholders."

John Elfed Jones

John Elfed Jones CBE DL, Chairman.

Copies of this statement are being sent to shareholders. Copies are also available from the Company Secretary, Welsh Water PLC, Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way, Brecon, Powys LD3 7HP.

Unaudited Interim Results for the Half Year to 30th September 1990

Turnover up 13 per cent to £146 million.

Profit before tax up 20 per cent on 1989 pro forma to £72.7 million.

Interim dividend of 6.5 pence per share (net), an increase on the notional 1989 interim dividend of 16.3 per cent.

Satisfactory progress made on the capital investment programme.

Continuing pursuit of group strategy of developing non-core business.



WELSH WATER PLC

TENNIS

Sampras's big serve earns him a place in the record books

FROM ANDREW LONGMORE, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, MUNICH

THE Grand Slam Cup gained the champion it needed, though not in the way it would have wanted here yesterday. The confidence and ease of Pete Sampras's victory over Brad Gilbert, which earned him \$2 million (about £1.03 million), the biggest cheque in tennis history, brought back memories of his triumph in the US Open final, but little to wipe away the rather clearer memories of the unseemly confrontation between Gilbert and David Wheaton during their five-set semi-final, which led to both players being fined \$5,000 for "unsportsmanlike conduct".

The simple truth, as Agassi found to his cost in the US Open final, and Chang in the semi-final here, is that when Sampras finds the range on his big serve, the argument is as good as over. He hit 16 aces in the 103 minutes of the rout, including seven in two games early in the third set, to reduce Gilbert to helplessness and the match to one-sided anti-climax. Sampras seemed to feel it, too. As he completed his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win, Sampras simply shook hands and walked to his chair, hardly the reaction of the pools winner. But then Sampras is the type

who puts a tick against the "no publicity" box. "I won an exhibition worth a lot of money. When I won the US Open I was more in awe than I am now. I don't feel I am king of the grand slams," he said. In time, he might see his win differently, but yesterday it simply marked the end of a momentous and profitable year for the Californian, aged 19, who donated \$250,000 - more than he will earn if he wins the Australian Open, his next goal, in the new year - to the Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

Of the match, there is not much to add. Never has racket been put to ball so little for so much in the history of the game. After just when he had glimpses of a break, Gilbert knew he would have to stick at \$1 million for his week's work. In a piece of scheduling, worthy of the final weekend of the US Open, he had just 16 hours to recover from his controversial four-hour marathon against Wheaton the previous day and even more than usual seemed to have trouble with forward propulsion.

As Sampras was suffering from blisters, it made for a rather static encounter, interesting mainly to statisticians, who could clock up Sampras's aces with an onerous regularity, and the one member of the Brad Gilbert fan club (Munich branch). But not even his critics nor his own self-chastisement could activate Gilbert, who had accepted his fate long before the end.

He had enjoyed an incredible week, courtesy of Agassi's withdrawal, been at the heart of much that was good - his naked enthusiasm and professionalism - and bad - his baiting of the gentle Wheaton in the semi-final - during the first week of the Compaq Grand Slam Cup and he had never away from his Republican view that the players deserve the money they earn, refreshing honesty in a sea of humbug. "I feel I came second in a great event," he said.

"From midway through the second set, I felt helpless. He was just outstripping me. He was outstripping me from the baseline and when that happens you know you have problems."

Just how big became apparent in the second set, in which Gilbert won just five points on Sampras's serve. It was not that he was missing returns, he was not getting near enough to the ball to do anything coherent at all. Sampras took both the first two sets with aces and missed by a whisker on match point.

"Becker, Ivanisevic, Sampras. They are all depressing to face, but what makes Pete so difficult is that he hits the ball very close to his hand, like Roscoe Tanner, so you have to guess which way it is going," Gilbert said. So demoralised was Gilbert by the third set, as one final chance to break was ended with thudding predictability, that his only response was a cry of frustration: "Why does he always hit aces?" Later, he answered his own question. "Sampras has star quality and he's only 19. Only one comes along in ten years. I might have bought some bad stock in my life, but I'd sure like to buy some stock in him."

RESULTS: Brad Gilbert (US) vs Pete Sampras (US) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. Final: Sampras (US) vs Brad Gilbert (US) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. Final: Sampras (US) vs Brad Gilbert (US) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

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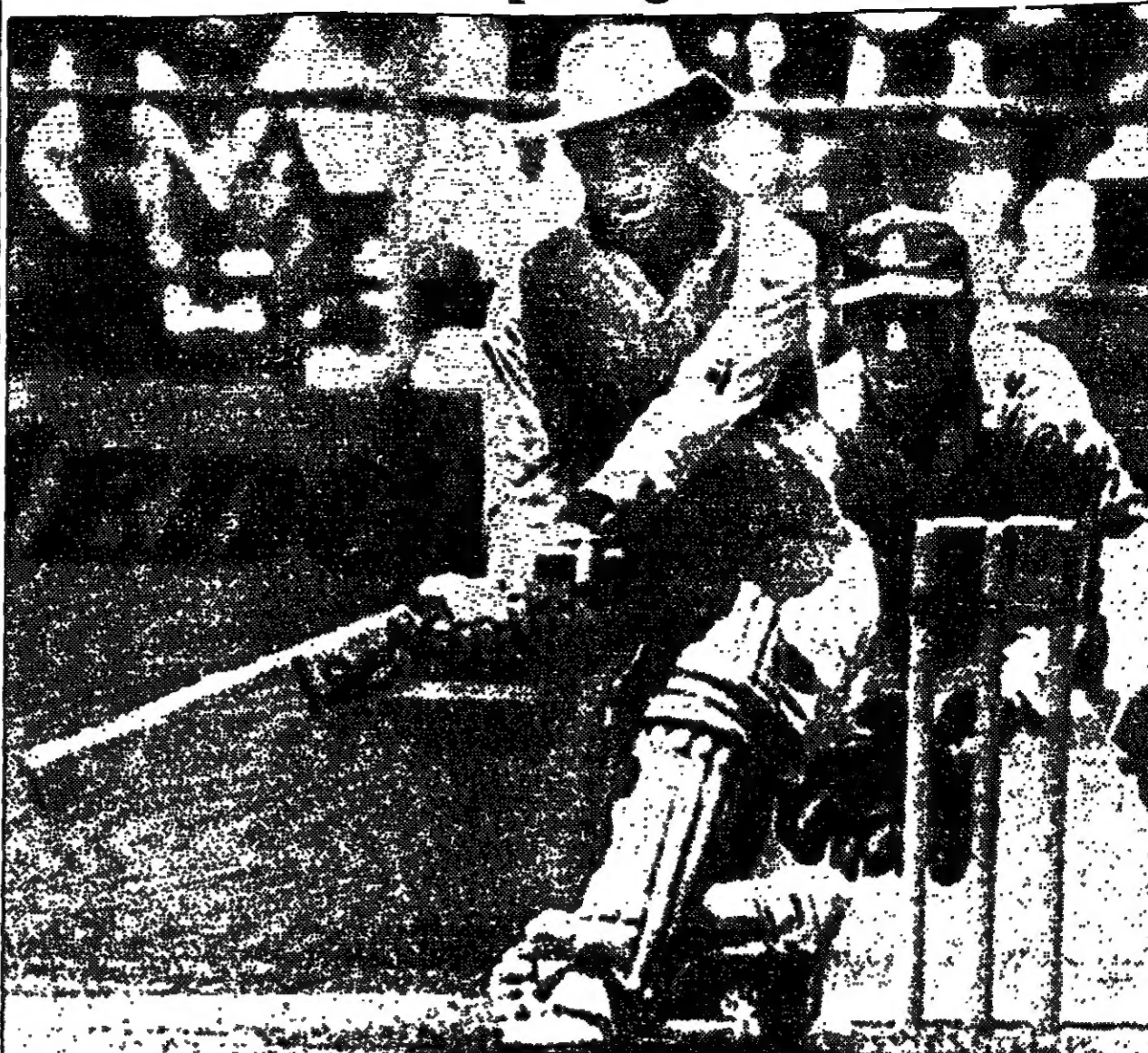
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The man who swept England's hopes away



Hero of the Gabba: Dean Jones on the attack during his record-breaking 145 against England at Brisbane. It was the highest innings played by an Australian batsman in limited-overs internationals. Reports, page 32

SCOREBOARDS FROM BRISBANE

Saturday									
New Zealand won toss									
ENGLAND									
*D A Gough b Harris	48	68	48	3	117	87			
W Larkins c Young b Pettie	15	-	3	38	32				
R A Smith b Morrison	41	-	3	103	72				
A J Lamb not out	10	-	-	14	12				
J E Morris c Young b Pettie	15	-	-	30	22				
JA J Stewart not out	20	-	2	58	44				
CC Lewis run out (Wright)	3	-	-	9	6				
LA to start on short single	27	-	-	3	35	20			
PA J DeFreitas not out	13								
Extras (b 8, w 5)	13								
Total (for 8 wickets, 50 overs, 250 mins)	203								
P C R Turner, A C Fraser and D E Malcolm did not bat.									
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-27 (Gough 11), 2-89 (Smith 22), 3-115 (Smith 35), 4-122 (Gough 41), 5-142 (Lamb 10), 6-148 (Gough 48), 7-153 (Lamb 10), 8-153 (Lamb 10), 9-153 (Lamb 10), 10-153 (Lamb 10).									
AUSTRALIA									
D C Boon b Fraser	10	56	48	1	27	17			
G R Marsh c Larkins b Blackwell	62	1	5	166	123				
S R Waugh not out	14	-	-	25	15				
M E Waugh c Turnbull b DeFreitas	5	-	-	1	8	5			
S P O'Donnell c Morris b DeFreitas	0	-	-	1	1				
A R Border not out	4	-	-	4	4				
Extras (b 3, lb 2, w 7, nb 1)	23								
Total (for 5 wickets, 50 overs, 20 mins)	283								
G R Marsh, T A Healy, B A Reid and G G Rackemann did not bat.									
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-28 (Marsh 10), 2-208 (Jones 102), 3-281 (S Waugh 5), 4-272 (S Waugh 10), 5-272 (S Waugh 10), 6-272 (S Waugh 10), 7-272 (S Waugh 10), 8-272 (S Waugh 10), 9-272 (S Waugh 10), 10-272 (S Waugh 10).									
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SNOOKER

White the romantic with a cause

By STEVE ACTON

JIMMY WHITE's successful defence of his Coaltide world matchplay title, by beating Stephen Hendry 18-9 in the final at Brentwood on Saturday, vindicated a pledge he made more to himself than to anybody else: that he was determined to be a player to be feared again. He is not only that, but also one to be envied, for the first prize was £100,000.

White said before the tournament that he was increasingly irritated at being described as "the best player never to have won the world championship". He believed he could improve on his record of being runner-up twice, especially after such an important victory over the world champion, who was previously unbeaten in 21 successive matches in Britain this season.

White, aged 28 and ranked fourth in the world, said: "If I didn't believe I could win the world championship and become world No. 1, I'd pack the same up. I certainly believe I'm as good, if not better, as Hendry and Steve Davis. I know Stephen has been playing really well this season but I've never conceded him. I've been too busy thinking about myself. I'm not being disrespectful, but it's a joke how I kept getting beaten by so many mugs. There were guys thinking I wasn't really on the scene any more, they didn't believe I could be the main man because I was giving them so many easy chances. Well, now I'm totally prepared for the rest of the season, and much more so than when I won this year, and winning the world championship is my burning ambition."

Nobody has ever doubted White's ability; his lack of dedication and particularly his unwillingness to practice made way of his admirers realize that they were not only backing a romantic but too often a lost cause.

This season White has been putting in the time on the table and, although, until Brentwood, results were still not going his way he was getting more and more prickly about it, which was a good sign. Determined to defend his title, he destroyed Terry Griffiths 9-2 in the semi-finals and showed new resolve when he recovered from 7-5 behind on Friday night, White put him to the sword once more to lead 10-6 overnight.

On Saturday, White was without mercy. He allowed Hendry just one frame in an afternoon session and broke of 94, 92, 82 and 51 put him 17-7 ahead and on Saturday night after allowing Hendry some salvaged pride, White finished him off.

The Scot's defeat was emphatic. Hendry would have been an entirely different proposition had he not been suffering from a nasty head cold but, to his credit, he refused to make it an excuse.

Hendry has set several records this season and most remain unbroken. He has, for example, won five successive world ranking events, the matchplay not being one as it is an invitational tournament, and Hendry's record of 31 successive victories in those will live on at least until he tackles the next ranking event, the Mercantile Credit Classic, at Bournemouth in January.

His £40,000 runners-up cheque, added to the bonus high-break prize of £10,000 for his magnificent 142 total clearance on Friday, means his earnings this season to £368,000.

If he had to lose, then the matchplay, which carries no ranking points, was a good place to do it, especially at this time of year when he will have to recharge his batteries. I haven't stopped since August. I felt really rough and I'll be taking a ten day holiday from Tuesday evening.

"I only hope against Jimmy was to win the Saturday afternoon session. I've had a great run but I don't intend to make a habit of losing."

RESULTS: Jimmy White (Eng) vs Stephen Hendry (Sco) 18-9. Semi-finals: Jimmy White (Eng) vs Terry Griffiths (Wls) 9-2. Jimmy White (Eng) vs Steve Davis (Wls) 10-6. Final: Jimmy White (Eng) vs Stephen Hendry (Sco) 18-9.

Fine for Gilbert and Wheaton

By ANDREW LONGMORE

BRAD Gilbert and David Wheaton were fined \$5,000 each for "unsportsmanlike conduct" after a heated exchange during the semi-final. Only rapid intervention by Ken Farrar, the tournament referee, stopped the two Americans from exchanging blows as they squared up to each other during a changeover at the end of the third set.

"The incident was caused initially by Wheaton, who verbally assaulted Gilbert, who Gilbert escalated by charging over to his opponent's bench, Farrar said. "Both players are therefore guilty of provocation. Clearly, this misconduct is detrimental to the sport."

Wheaton also accused Stephen Winyard, the umpire, of making a "million-dollar mistake" in overruling a line call on a crucial point in the third set tie-break, a decision which started the argument. Wheaton felt that Winyard had made the

overturn as a result of Gilbert's virulent protest. "He (Gilbert) started crying and whining and then he got his way like a child," Wheaton's case was taken up by his brother, John, who went round to the far side of the court to plead his case. "That, in turn, upset Gilbert and when further words were exchanged at the changeover, the two players stood staring at each other."

"It was just the heat of the moment," Gilbert said. "We were playing for a lot of money. It wasn't good for the sport but it was quick and that was it."

Clearly Farrar saw it the same way, because in the context of the \$6 million prize-money on offer - Sampras doubling his prize-money by winning \$2 million, Gilbert won \$1 million - a \$5,000 fine is hardly adequate punishment for an incident seen by reputedly the largest television audience ever for a tennis match.

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Kelly falls to the amateurs

By PETER BRYAN

SEAN Kelly, third in this year's World Cup after winning the title last year, ended his road season yesterday with a defeat over his home roads at Carrick-on-Suir, Tipperary.

The 30-mile Christmas handicap race, which started, appropriately, in Sean Kelly Square, had drawn an entry of nearly 150 amateurs, all keen to dethrone the Irish champion and none inclined to observe the spirit of Christmas.

The three Irish professionals in the race, Kelly, his team colleague, Martin Earley and Laurence Roche, younger brother of the former Tour de France winner, were out of the race from the start. Roche, on scratch mark but found the five minutes allowance to the main group just too much to wipe out.

Another Carrick-on-Suir rider, led in Kevin Mullins of Charleville, for a sprint finish. Kelly finished fourth, 30 seconds behind and alongside third-placed John Sheehan, of Dublin.

Kelly is not competing for the next six weeks before taking up for the first stage race of 1991, the six-day Ruta del Sol in Spain.

Winning finish to Faldo's fine year

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Nick Faldo capped a magnificent year with a victory by four shots in the Johnnie Walker Asian Classic here, scoring 68 in his final round on Saturday to finish with a total of 270. Ian Woosnam was runner-up.

"It's been a good year and there is no better way to finish it than with a win," the Masters champion said. "There was a lot of pressure. I wanted to win and everybody expected me to win. I was pleased with the way the swing held up."

Mike Clayton, of Australia, came within two shots of Faldo after 12 holes but three birdies from Faldo on the inward half blunted all challenges. "I was never really in the hunt," Clayton, who had a final round of 67, said. "I thought Faldo would get a few birdies."

Woosnam faltered when he dropped strokes at the third and sixth holes. "I was a bit unlucky. I had a bad lie in the sand at the third hole and I came out sideways," he said. "I did get a few breaks and have ended second again. I will not be hitting any balls for a while. I am going to take a break until March."

Faldo also plans to have a lengthy rest. "I will be spending time with the kids and building

Nottinghamshire and Kent both lose great stalwarts

English game and widely acclaimed as one of its finest ambassadors.

Nottinghamshire's president for five years, although he retired from his post on the club committee after 32 years service last February. Eight of his years spent on the committee were as chairman.

He died yesterday in the early hours in hospital at Worksop after a lengthy illness.

David Hughes, aged 43, Lancashire's captain is to have a second testimonial in 1992. His first in 1981 raised £76,000. Hughes, who has been in charge of the side for the last four years after previously captaining the second team, has led Lancashire to success in all three limited-overs competitions.

Lancashire have given him a two-year playing contract but he is likely to step down as captain in 1992 with Neil Fairbrother likely to take over from him.

ADELAIDE: Graeme Hick, who served Kent County Cricket Club as a player and administrator for more than 40 years until his retirement at the end of last season, has died as the result of a car accident.

Page, who was 60 and lived near Maidstone, was returning home from a coaching session in Sevenoaks on Friday night when the accident occurred.

Pakistan's request is rejected

DELHI (Reuters) - Indian officials have refused Pakistan's request for a postponement of the Asia Cup and said on Saturday that the tournament would go ahead as scheduled.

Pakistan said on Thursday that they wanted to postpone indefinitely both the Asia Cup and a planned tour of India early next year because of Hindu-Muslim riots.

The Asia Cup is on whether Pakistan participate or not, Jagmohan Dalmiya, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, said.

He said the other sides in the one-day competition, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, had confirmed that they would still play and the Cup would start as planned on December 25.

Dalmiya said he had sought, without success, clarification from Pakistan on whether they would still play. "We have to decide in the next two days," he added.

Behind them, the casualty list continued to grow. Mike Plant, the sixth-placed American, reported that his 60ft yacht, Durrenall, was taking in 50 gallons of water a day and he had lost all his spinners. A problem also faced by Isabelle Autissier, the only woman left in the race, who dropped two places to eighth yesterday.

Another American with trouble was Jack Boye, sailing the fourth-placed division two yacht Project City Kids. Trailing 1,600 miles behind the leader, knot northeasterly breeze and confused sea, she won the 25-nautical-mile Olympic-course race by 53 seconds on corrected time from Prime Factor.

French close gap on Martin

AS JOHN Martin, of South Africa, edged northwards last night to within 800 miles of Sydney and the finish of the second stage of the BOC single-handed round the world race, his rivals began to close the gap (Barry Pickhills writes).

Alain Gautier and Christophe Auguin, the two Frenchmen vying for second place, had been a stroke, to the former Test off-spinner, Tim May, who has reduced the margin to 212 miles after Martin, in his 60ft Allied Bank, had run into calms.

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Revamped One Tonner takes lead

SYDNEY - Western Port Venture, a three-year-old One Tonner given new life by her British designer, Ed Dubois, won the second race of the NorTel Asia Pacific offshore championship here yesterday (Bob Ross writes). She leads the series by half a point.

Owned by Peter Grant and Les Martin, of Victoria, Western Port Venture is carrying two square metres more area in a broader-girthed mainsail. Sailed by Ian Walker in a 16-knot northeasterly breeze and confused sea, she won the 25-nautical-mile Olympic-course race by 53 seconds on corrected time from Prime Factor.

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TODAY'S FIXTURES

- RUGBY UNION 27
● FOOTBALL 28, 29
● RACING 29

SPORT

England work off effect of mourning after

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
BRISBANE

IT IS coming to something when the England cricket team can take comfort from a 37-run defeat by Australia, but that was what was happening here last night.

Even if there was not champagne spraying from the dressing-room balcony, there was still a noticeable change of mood in an England camp which, 24 hours earlier, had descended into a state of mourning after another abject effort against New Zealand.

By rousing themselves from such depths to pursue 284 against Australia with a vigour which might, but for two run-outs, have been successful, England proved to themselves, and not a moment too soon, that they are not as bad as they were having us believe.

The possible benefits of this do not relate to the World Series Cup competition in which England, despite their contrariness, should still qualify for the finals unless

New Zealand upset Australia in Hobart tomorrow. More important, by far, is that England are at last emerging into the real world of first-class cricket with something resembling an encouraging day behind them.

Anyone with a passing knowledge of cricket tours could have divined from England's itinerary that to lose the first Test badly would be a prelude to a month of searching for form and confidence in the wrong environment. The result is that, in the past 16 days, England have played eight one-day games and lost six of them, generally with few redeeming features.

The schedule was devised for financial and logistical reasons connected with one-day cricket and sanctioned, extraordinarily, by a touring team whose needs were never part of the equation. Its curse is that England now have only one four-day game, starting in Ballarat on Thursday, before resuming an Ashes series which,

despite appearances, is far from over.

With that in mind, there were gains from this weekend of two defeats, primarily the partial rehabilitation of Graham Gooch, the England captain. He battled for almost four hours over the two games and, while dismissing his scores of 48 and 41 as "nothing to shout about", he is slowly but perceptibly regaining his timing.

The calm and positive spin bowling of Tufnell and the batting of Alec Stewart were further bonuses. Ten days ago, the recall of Stewart seemed to be based on flimsy evidence but, yesterday he was a revelation, his fluent 40 from 25 balls casting concern around every Australian face.

Stewart has totalled 235 runs in six innings, three of them not out. He has, in fact, only been dismissed once by a bowler in that period and his second run-out, yesterday, would surely have persuaded the team manager, his

father, Micky Stewart, to send for some sedatives if he was not already drugged up against the effects of a chest infection.

This was the sixth run-out England have suffered in three internationals. All have involved batsmen in the top seven and most have been the result of aberrations. Gooch, discussing this last night, agreed that its cause lay in the anxiety and shortage of confidence in the team.

Much the worst sight of yesterday was that of Robin Smith pushing gently towards Allan Border's left hand at short mid-wicket, setting off neurotically for

a run and, far too late to matter, going frantically into reverse.

Smith has yet to reach 50 in an international game on the tour. He made 41 on Saturday, though not with conviction, and dropped two places down the order to No.5 yesterday. His dismissal betrayed his tension and he ranks high in the list of England's worries.

So, too, does Devon Malcolm. Melbourne, with the uneven bounce it has offered of late, is the place where Malcolm must first be a repair job on his morale. His confidence was not high going into this weekend and it became non-existent in a bizarre six overs on Saturday, in which he conceded 43 runs and bowled two wides and three no-balls.

England's selection against New Zealand was baffling. Having beaten them two days earlier with an attack which worked effectively, they broke it up for no good reason. Hemmings, the

second spinner, was left out for Malcolm and Bicknell was rested.

Surely this was flawed thinking. All England needed to do, to be certain of their finals place, was beat New Zealand on Saturday. It was not the time for rests and experiments; they could be implemented once the victory had been achieved. Instead, admittedly armed with an inadequate 203, England bowled so badly Gooch was obliged to concede that they could not have defended 240.

England reverted to plan A yesterday but came up against the hurricane named Dean Jones. In making 145 from 136 balls, the highest one-day international score by an Australian, Jones became the only player in the world to average above 50 at this form of the game. It was his seventh century and, although he does not rate it his best, it was rivetingly inventive batting once he had overcome a shaky start. Jones, in this mood, is almost

impossible to contain and he could operate in luxury with Geoff Marsh playing an ideal role at the other end. Their second-wicket stand of 185 beat their own Australian record and, with 90 coming from the last ten overs, Australia's total was their highest against England.

To beat them, England had to make one run fewer than their own one-day record, batting second. When Larkins, whose retention is ever more mystifying, was out early, Lamb was promoted to join Gooch and for more than an hour they kept the game alive. They fell in consecutive overs from Greg Matthews, closely followed by the two run-outs, and apart from some spirited hitting from DeFreitas, the challenge was never serious thereafter, as Australia remained on course to be the first team to win every game in their World Series Cup programme.

Scoreboards, page 30

Bright's goal is all wasteful Palace deserve

By STUART JONES

Crystal Palace..... 1
Luton Town..... 0

CRYSTAL Palace have lifted themselves above Tottenham Hotspur into third place and could climb closer to the leaders of the first division before the new year. On December 30, they entertain Liverpool, eight points above them, in a fixture to be televised live.

That prospect is enthralling. Yesterday's game was not. Although Luton Town chose for the first time this season to reinforce their defence by operating with a sweeper, Palace's victory was predictable even before Bright claimed the lone goal from Salako's measured cross midway through the first half.

If Palace had not contrived numerous ways in which to squander promising openings, their smallest crowd of the season might have witnessed their biggest League win. Considering the high quality of their forwards, their total of goals continues to be disproportionately low. In 17 matches so far, they have scored only 26.

The tactics of their opponents are partially responsible. "Everybody seems to play against us with a sweeper, nowadays," Steve Coppell, their manager, said. He takes that as a compliment to Wright and Bright but he admitted that, surprisingly, he has yet to devise methods of

countering the system in practice.

For all their lavish possession, Palace's approach was often misdirected. In spite of probing regularly on either flank, they centred their attacks on the area where Luton were numerically strongest. Beaumont, Dreyer and McDonough were comfortable as long as the ball was in the air.

Although that happened to be the source of the winner, the standard of the rest of Palace's crosses was poor. Nevertheless, Coppell felt that before the interval his side played as well as they have "for a while and I thought we were unlucky not to be further ahead".

Once Luton became more adventurous, though, Palace were inevitably more productive. Wright, denied on one occasion by Chamberlain's instinctive reactions, was later twice clean through and failed to apply the finishing touch. Such profligacy will be costly against the likes of Liverpool.

Vic Callow, the referee, played as obtrusive a role as anybody during the chilly afternoon. As well as booking four players, Preece, Williams, Thomas and McDonough, he spoke at length to six others and also to Coppell for "standing outside the dugout".

With the combative Barry, the touches and vision of McAllister and the running of Speed to complement their captain, Leeds have a midfield to match any in the country. Even on an afternoon when they did not touch the heights,

Little big man saves the picture on a bad day for small screen

By PETER BALL

Leeds United..... 2
Everton..... 1

THERE were a few purple patches, but for most of yesterday afternoon Leeds were competent rather than inspired for the television cameras. It was all they needed to be to defeat Everton, whose hopes of providing meaningful resistance were effectively ended by two goals in the first 25 minutes.

In Everton's state, the game had always looked a doubtful choice for ITV's first live match at Elland Road, and so it proved, with Leeds fading after a bright spell. "Just when you want things to happen, they don't," Howard Wilkinson said afterwards. "It wasn't as good a performance as others in the last month, but that's football."

The exception who ensured that the cameras' presence was not completely wasted, and to the surprise of no one, won the man of the match award was Strachan. "I'm enjoying my football as much in this side as I've ever done," the little Scot remarked, and his talent again lit up a murky afternoon.

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First division

Team	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal Diff
Manchester United	17	10	5	2	25	+14
Liverpool	17	9	6	2	24	+11
Sheff Wed	17	9	5	3	23	+10
Sheff Utd	17	8	6	3	22	+10
Derby	17	8	5	4	21	+9
Leeds	17	7	7	3	21	+10
Sheff F	17	7	6	4	20	+10
QPR	17	7	5	5	19	+10
Nottingham	17	6	7	4	19	+10
Blackburn	17	6	6	5	18	+10
Coventry	17	6	5	6	18	+10
Sheff B	17	6	5	6	18	+10
Wolves	17	6	4	7	17	+10
Millwall	17	5	7	5	17	+10
Cardiff	17	5	6	6	16	+10
Sheff P	17	5	5	7	16	+10
Reading	17	5	4	8	15	+10
Blackpool	17	4	7	6	15	+10
Walsley	17	4	6	7	14	+10
Sheff A	17	4	5	8	13	+10
Grimsby	17	4	4	9	12	+10
Sheff C	17	4	3	10	11	+10
Doncaster	17	3	6	8	12	+10
Exeter	17	3	5	9	12	+10
Lincoln	17	3	4	10	11	+10
Accrington	17	3	3	11	9	+10
Barrow	17	2	5	10	9	+10
Carlisle	17	2	4	11	8	+10
Crewe	17	2	3	12	7	+10
Chesham	17	2	2	13	6	+10
Wrexham	17	2	1	14	5	+10
Portsmouth	17	1	3	13	5	+10
Tranmere	17	1	2	14	4	+10
Southend	17	1	1	15	3	+10
Woking	17	1	1	15	3	+10
Stevenage	17	1	0	16	2	+10
Cambridge	17	0	1	16	1	+10
Weymouth	17	0	0	17	0	+10

Effectively, Everton's cause was lost almost before the game began. Ebbrell, whose eagerness strays into impetuosity, missed the first chance of the game as Beagrie's cross reached him on the edge of the area and compounded his error by bringing down McAllister as the Scottish international exchanged passes with the vibrant Shutt and bore in on goal.

"When you've got the best goalkeeper in the world behind you, you don't need to make rash challenges," Kendall said pointedly, "because there was less chance of beating him from an angle than there was from the penalty spot."

The goal opened up the midfield log-jam and for the next 20 minutes Leeds began to flow smoothly forward as Strachan and McAllister weaved some delightful patterns and Shutt provided a ready outlet.

Two moves in that period typified the inventiveness. From the first, Shutt produced a corner as he collected a diagonal pass on the wing and centred almost in one movement, and from the corner he scored as he met Sterland's flick at the far post.

The second, if anything, was even more satisfying, the ball flowing from Strachan at inside left forward to Barry at outside right. Barry waited for McAllister to overlap before releasing him for a centre, which this time came to nothing as Watson rose to clear.

For a time it looked as if Everton might be overrun, but their spirit at least could not be faulted and they held on determinedly. Slowly Leeds were dragged back into a slogging match. Everton's lack of confidence was visible as Beagrie volleyed over from a good position and then elected to pass when an even better opportunity presented itself.

Finally, the arrival of Nevin to run at the Leeds defence suggested that an Achilles heel was there to be exploited, but McAllister hit the terracing as another chance arrived and, by the time Cottee at last forced Lukic to make a real save, the die was cast.

Leeds had moved that bit closer to the top; but greater challenges lie ahead, with Liverpool just around the corner. "We'll see how we're matching up at the end of January, that'll be the benchmark," Wilkinson said.

The richest prize in tennis history



Moment of triumph: Pete Sampras's victory over Brad Gilbert in Munich earned him more than £1 million, the biggest cheque in history of tennis. Report, page 30

The dangers of stretching the limits of training

By JOHN GOODBODY

COMMENT

TOO many top-class sportsmen and women are over-training and risking not only failure in competition but also injuries and illnesses because of the stress on their bodies.

An survey by *The Times* shows there is widespread concern in sports medicine about the harmful effects of over-training. We asked experts for their views on physical stress following the comments by Steve Backley, the British javelin-thrower who holds the world record, that his ambition of adding the world and Olympic gold medals to his European title could find him ending up as a "millionaire or a cripple in a wheelchair".

Backley says: "At 21, I'm only too aware that I'm wrecking my body by throwing two or three times a week. The strain is constant and enormous, both physically and psychologically." He describes his throwing elbow as a "mess".

Professor Hannu Kuipers, a Dutch physiologist and former world speed skating champion, says: "People think that the more training you do the more benefit you will get; that the sky is the limit. In fact, the improvement curve flattens out as the volume increases and eventually dips back down to the baseline."

The problems created by over-training have been emphasised in recent years because of the improvement in standards and the pressure, sometimes financial, to succeed. There is more evidence of over-training in individual, rather than team, sports, partly because a solitary athlete is responsible for his own success or failure.

Professor Kuipers insists: "The most important component of training is the recovery phase."

Effects of short-term over-training can include injury and premature fatigue, often shown by an elevated resting pulse. However, a couple of days' rest can usually alleviate the condition.

Long-term over-training is more gradual and serious. Athletes begin to hate training. They have sleeping disorders and reduced appetites and weight loss, as well as constant tiredness. In research studies, the levels of testosterone, the male hormone, and particularly plasma glutamine, an amino acid which is an essential fuel for the kidney and blood cells, all seem to have been significantly lower. After a period of rest, these have returned to normal.

After examining research, Eric Newsome, Professor of Biochemistry at Oxford, concludes that acute and chronic reductions in plasma glutamine levels may be, at least in part, responsible for the immuno-suppression reported following periods of severe exercise

or training. John Atkinson, the technical director of the British Amateur Gymnastics Association, talks of three leading competitors several years ago, one of whom suffered from anorexia, another from a skin infection and a third from a nervous disorder.

A report by the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council has said that there is no evidence that activities like jogging — particularly if they are carried out in a recreational manner — bring with them a measured risk of arthritis. But Dr Ivan Williams, the medical director of the Horder Centre for Arthritis in Crowborough, thinks there is a lot of circumstantial evidence of arthritis occurring in outstanding competitors.

Dr Dan Tunstall Pedoe, of the London Sports Medicine Institute, points out that if intensive training were as bad as some people had

made out, then a disproportionate number of former competitors would be suffering from arthritis. Dr Peter Sperry, author of *Sport and Medicine*, points out that the first cohorts of heavy trainers are only now becoming middle-aged.

Yet as Dr Roger Hackney, an Olympic steeplechaser, says: "An experienced coach should know when an athlete should be taking a day's rest or a week off. More training is leading to better performance. It is the survival of the fittest. If you're going to take off a couple of days a week, then the people who can cope with training on those days will win the gold medals."

John Koutedakis, the chief physiologist at the British Olympic Medical Centre at Harrow, said: "Rest is an evil word for most athletes and coaches."



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